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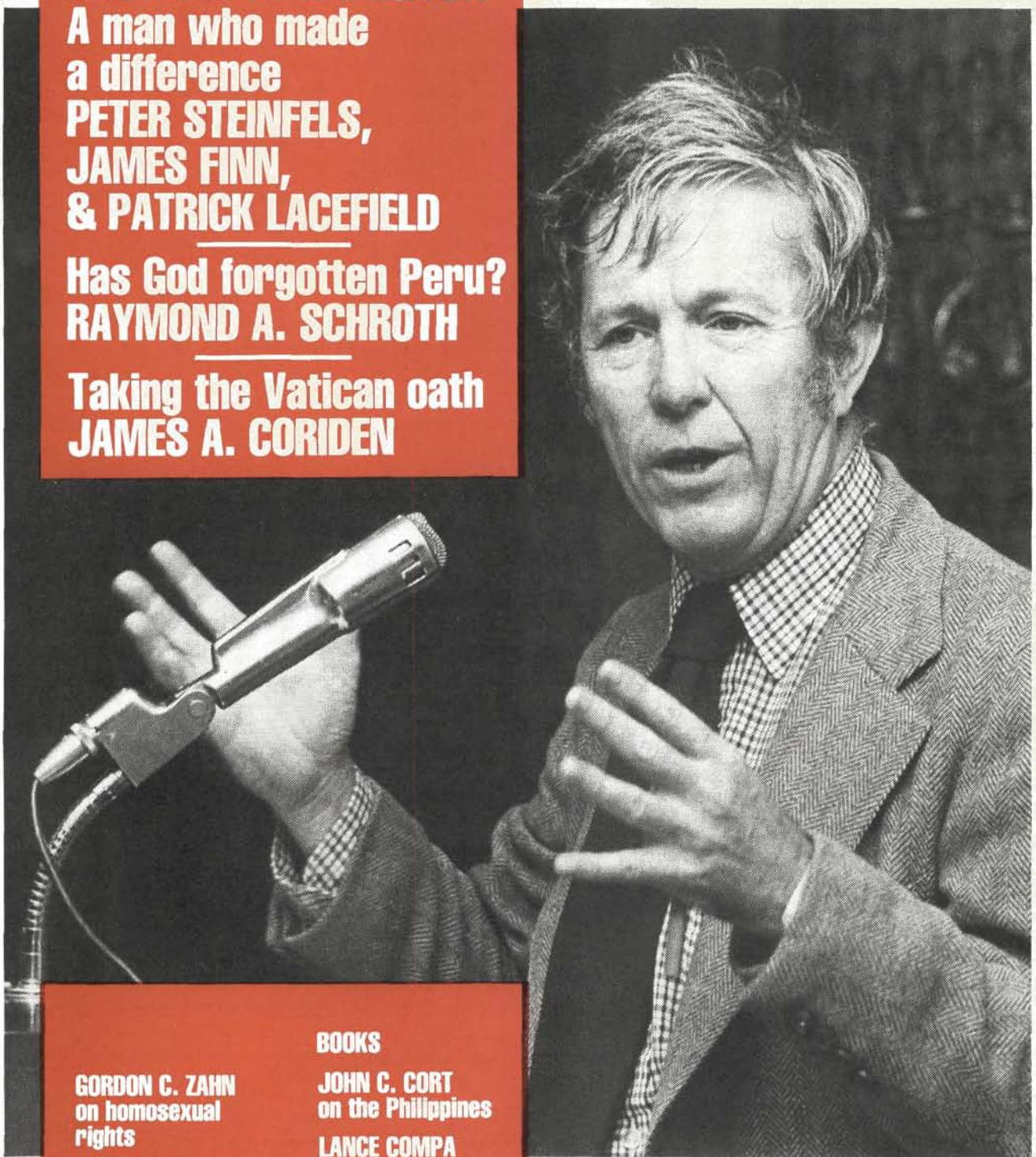
COMMONWEAL

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
A man who made a difference
PETER STEINFELS, JAMES FINN, & PATRICK LACEFIELD

Has God forgotten Peru?
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Taking the Vatican oath
JAMES A. CORIDEN



GORDON C. ZAHN on homosexual rights

BOOKS

JOHN C. CORT on the Philippines

LANCE COMPA on black workers

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CORRESPONDENCE

Catholics & democracy

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In the spirit of Dennis McCann's call to temperate dialogue in American Catholicism (a call which he seems curiously loath to heed in his review of my *Catholicism and the Renewal of American Democracy* [May 19]), may I make four comments on McCann's evaluation of my work?

First, the "mean-spirited injustice" toward Dorothy Day which Professor McCann finds in my earlier book, *Tranquillitas Ordinis*, was not evident to Robert Gilliam, whose review in *The Catholic Worker* (December 1987) stated that my "section on Dorothy Day is mostly right and genuinely respectful." In all charity, I doubt that McCann's standards of justice and respect in evaluating Dorothy Day's manifold contributions to American Catholicism are more stringent than those at the Worker.

Second, I'm not sure what Professor McCann is talking about when he opines that *Tranquillitas Ordinis* is "all but disqualifie[d]...from serious consideration." But on the assumption that he regards Avery Dulles, S.J., as a reasonable and serious thinker, I shall simply note that Dulles described the book as "thoroughly researched, cogently reasoned, lucidly organized, and temperately expressed," and hoped that it might "change the state of the question." Well, we can always hope!

Third, in *Catholicism and the Renewal of American Democracy*, I do not criticize the fact of criticism of John Paul II, but precisely the "mean-spirited injustice" which has too often marked that criticism. I am not interested in "heresy trials," pace Professor McCann. I am interested in a debate over the pope's distinctive theological perspective that does not caricature John Paul II as a Polish commissar bent on rolling back Vatican II.

Finally, on the matter of Mary Daly: Why is it "guilt by association" to note that a seminar of the Catholic Theological Society of America praised Daly—"that crone, hag, witch, spinster, fury, amazon who dared to challenge the character of the CTSA," as the CTSA Proceedings put it—as a "significant voice from the periphery that cannot be ignored by the revisionist center without peril"? When the "revisionist center" of American Catholic feminist theology publicly distinguishes itself from the deconstruction of the Christian classics that is so typical of Mary Daly, rather than praising her in the terms I cited, then I shall think that something indeed important has happened.

I have appreciated McCann's contributions to Catholic social thought, just as I appreciate his kind words about my "occasionally brilliant" forays into certain aspects of public theology. Perhaps, when he stops hyperventilating about my alleged affinities with the rhetorical style of Newt Gingrich, Professor McCann and I can sit down and argue matters of substance in a way that John Courtney Murray would approve: over a Beefeater martini, "desperately dry."

GEORGE WEIGEL

The morals of managers

Williamstown, Mass.

To the Editors: I write in response to Barbara Ley Toffler's review [May 5] of my recent book *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers*. Ms. Toffler asserts that I am captive to an ideology that argues "that morality demands an unswerving, preemptive adherence to traditional moral values and beliefs" and that I measure managers' occupational morality against such an absolute standard. This assertion completely falsifies the book. I invite *Commonweal* readers to decide the matter for themselves.

I state the book's approach succinctly early on. I note that in popular usage "the notions of morality and ethics have a decidedly prescriptive, indeed moralistic, flavor." "However," I go on to say, "this book treats ethics and morality sociologically, that is, as empirical, objective realities to be investigated. Therefore, in using the terms morality and ethics, I do not refer to any specific or given, much less absolute, system of norms and underlying beliefs. Moreover, I imply no judgment about the actions I describe from some fixed, absolute ethical or moral stance, as the terms are often used in popular discourse, sometimes even by corporate managers themselves." In short, the book examines managers' actual moral rules-in-use in their occupational situations and tries to discern the social contexts and institutional logic that frame those rules. As it happens, my years of fieldwork in the corporate world led me to the conclusion that large hierarchical organizations create an ethos that encourages the men and women in them to bracket whatever moralities they might hold outside the workplace and to "look up and look around" for moral cues for behavior at work. Moral choices become inextricably bound to personal fates. This means that

(Continued on page 479)

Correction: In Michael T. Kaufman's "Poland: The Ghosts of Jews" (Aug. 11), the first line should have been, "One summer day in 1986 I went to Gdansk to interview Lech Walesa." THE EDITORS

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COMMONWEAL

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Enlarging the cloth

Presumably, it was not for its name that the Central American presidents chose the town of Tela, Honduras to sign their historic regional accord last month; still, the name is apt. In Spanish, *tela* means cloth, whatever is woven on a loom. The Tela agreement is a winding together of a number of strands. The parties yield bits of sovereignty to one another and to international bodies. The accord sets out not only to create a means of disbanding and resettling the Nicaraguan *contras*, but to establish ways of solving other regional conflicts and of promoting intraregional trade. Tela, then, reflects the design and complexity of the region's native *tela*; there is reason to hope that it displays some of its strength and durability as well.

Red is a favorite color of the region's weavers, and red is the color of the decade now closing. More than 160,000 people have died there over the past ten years of civil conflict. Forty percent of the region's people live in desperate poverty. Because of the cumulative effect of poor nutrition, inadequate-to-hazardous living conditions, the lifelong absence of rudimentary health care, scarce work and unregulated working situations, and the presence within individuals of a skein of debilitating diseases, the possibility that death may come calling on any given day is real. In Central America, the red is wound tightly with the black.

The Tela accord will not instantly change this pattern, but it is important. Two years after Oscar Arias Sanchez's initial effort at Esquipulas, Guatemala, the regional peacemaking process inaugurated there continues with greater seriousness and specificity. That initial agreement called for the disbanding of the *contras*. Tela finally sets dates, proposes means of implementation, outlines verification procedures, and introduces third parties willing to assist in both bankrolling and monitoring the project.

Not all these strands are fully secure. The civilian presidents of Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala who signed the Tela agreement are all serving out their final terms; in the latter two countries the military leaders who hold options on the political future of their nations are not distinguished by any special regard for human rights, constitutionalism, or international law. The regime in Nicaragua is required by the accord to absorb the *contras* while at the same time broadening political freedoms, giving up any dreams of exporting its revolution, and coping with a near-disastrous economy; a large order. So the Tela process could come unraveled, and with Central American history as prelude, that would be no surprise. Yet, whatever the disappointments and failures to come, Tela stands today as a benchmark in Central America's regional, self-directed process of peacemaking. The effort demands our admiration and support.

Tela should put to rest the U.S. propensity for exerting proprietary control over Central American destinies; specifically, its effort to overthrow the Sandinista

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revolution by imposing an economic blockade and by using the *contras* as military proxies. There is little doubt that the Nicaraguan regime will retain sympathy for the FMLN in El Salvador, but the Tela accord's provision for roving international observers to interdict any arms transfers or any insurgent use of border areas will make practical expression of that sympathy difficult.

The Tela accord confirms the ascendancy of Managua's pragmatists. Their willingness to guarantee greater political freedoms, pardon political prisoners, suspend conscription, permit (indeed, promote) monitoring of the political/electoral process, and adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward the Catholic hierarchy reflects a realism imposed no doubt by the costs of the *contra* war, the blockade, and mismanagement. But the futility of the war and its suffering have fostered a realization across the entire political spectrum in Nicaragua that, in the words of *contra* leader Arturo Cruz, "We Nicaraguans now can only face one another and blame or help ourselves." For the U.S., the moral should be: "Let it happen."

While such a realization has dawned finally on Nicaraguans, it remains a long way off for Salvadorans. While a major portion of the Tela communiqué deals with the civil war in El Salvador—it calls on all parties to seek a reconciliation—the accord, by its very nature, can offer little practical help. While the majority of Salvadorans long for an end to hostilities, the extremes have not forsaken their dreams of total victory. One-third of the country is under the influence of the FMLN, while the March elections brought all three branches of the government under the control of the rightist ARENA party, which former President José Napoleón Duarte has said supports a totalitarian project and an economic policy for the rich. In El Salvador, the red and the black will continue to issue from the loom relentlessly. In keeping with the spirit of the Tela accord, the U.S. must finally become serious about pressing all parties for a negotiated settlement there.

The major logistical concern of the Tela agreement, the repatriation of the *contras* and their families to Nicaragua, or their resettlement in a third country, will be a daunting task. The accord provides for international coordination and oversight of this process. But it is Washington that bears the greatest moral obligation to resettle those who carried on its fight. Part of the $49 million in last April's *contra* aid package was for use in the *contras*' "voluntary regional repatriation." It should be made available now, and augmented as necessary.

There is no immediate end to the poverty in Central America and the hostilities it inflames. But the Tela accord should signal a change: from an onslaught against the region's people to one against their poverty and political exclusion. The best and only workable first step toward this goal is in such multilateral accords as Tela. It is time for Central Americans to weave their own destiny. They deserve our cooperation.

COMING
Contemporary Catholic Writers' Series
Elizabeth Beverly on Shusaku Endo

REMEMBERING ANNE

Anyone who wrote for *Commonweal* over the last thirty years will have come, in time, to know Anne Robertson. Perhaps on the phone, perhaps through a short, appreciative note, she made and kept contact with our authors and reviewers; she knew who had moved, who had a new job or a new project, often who had suffered a loss or disappointment. Once an almost preternaturally shy person in groups, she could be herself in encountering people individually, whether face-to-face or through the mails. In Anne, people found a sympathetic listener and a faithful correspondent; they also found a mind that was quick with enthusiasm and a delighted co-conspirator in the battle against pretension. Certainly a good portion of the often remarked loyalty of our columnists and regular contributors was rooted in Anne's keen attention to their concerns and in her personification of what the magazine stood for at its best.

Anne had come to *Commonweal* from *Jubilee* magazine, a journal that combined the rebelliousness of the Beat generation with the postwar search for a spiritual discipline. She continued to be drawn to the literature of mysticism, East and West, just as she continued to write to *Jubilee* alumni such as Thomas Merton or the poet Robert Lax. She was a person in search of wisdom, and to many of us, though never, it seemed, to herself, she was a person who had found it.

Anne's titles, first editorial assistant and, finally, production editor, do not capture those lasting ties with writers, nor the engaged spirit with which she proofread galleys, and certainly not the literary sensibility that made her the strong right hand of *Commonweal*'s book and poetry editors. Indeed, the titles barely hint at the devoted and precise eye that "dummied up" each issue of *Commonweal*. In the old quarters on Madison Avenue, Anne labored, appropriately enough, in the very center of things, a row of file cabinets serving as her workspace as well as the border between the business and editorial sections of the office. At our new quarters on Dutch Street, she had at last an office of her own, in which she presided over a jungle of plants, an enormous picture file, and the biweekly task of fitting each issue together.

On Mondays and Tuesdays of alternate weeks, pica rule, scissors, tape, and lay-out sheets were massed on Anne's desk as she contemplated the puzzle of the next issue. It seemed to us who watched a kind of meditation that absorbed and held her fast in the exercise of her craft. From time to time she emerged to question, to ask an editor to turn a line, to query a spelling or date. By lunch on Tuesday, she would enlist the other editors in assigning book reviews and letters to the remaining available space and then, after an afternoon's flurry of measuring and pasting, the printer's messenger would have the "dummy."

The editors now on staff arrived long after Anne Robertson. Indeed a dozen or more editors, and an equal number of non-editorial staff, came and went over the years when she was contacting book reviewers, arranging theater dates for drama

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critics, and piecing together issues. We came to depend on her "institutional memory," her readiness to pitch in at deadline moments, her critical attention to detail, and in moments of uncertainty her ability to judge whether an article was for the commonweal, or not.

A few years ago, with her father and her sister, Anne nursed her mother through a prolonged terminal illness. Then a freak fall dealt Anne herself a prolonged convalescence with several broken bones. But finally, she returned to the office with a slight limp, with a cane, and with an eagerness to get back to work.

Unknown to her, however, she also returned with a cancer. Beneath the inactivity and pain of her recovery, it had worked its deadly way undetected and was already fatally spread when diagnosed this past June.

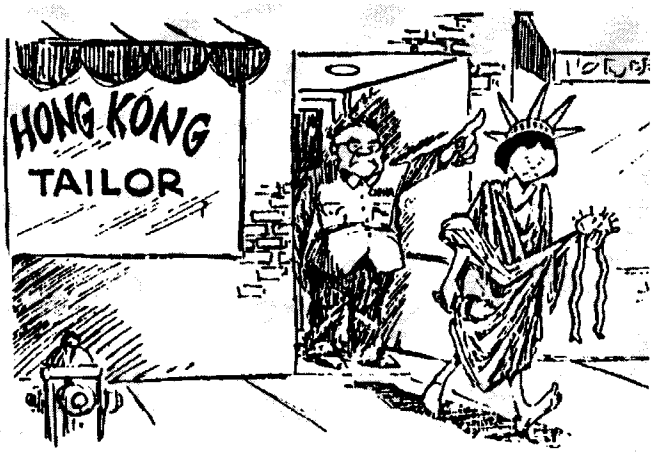
Anne Robertson died the evening of August 12 at home with her family. She was fifty-seven. Our dear friend and beloved colleague will be sorely missed here at *Commonweal*.

We invite our readers, our writers, and Anne's friends to gather with us for a Mass in her memory on Wednesday, September 27, at 6:30 P.M. at St. Joseph's Church, 371 Sixth Avenue, New York City.

REPORT FROM CHINA

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

HONG KONG & SHANGHAI



On June 3, I flew up to Shanghai from Hong Kong. Of course I had some misgivings: the Tiananmen demonstrations had been going on since mid-April, and, in the face of the protesters' call for Premier Li Peng to step down, the government had declared martial law on May 20. The Hong Kong papers spoke ominously of a force of two to three hundred thousand troops encircling the capital. But to outsiders like me, it seemed that the protesters were running out of steam and that the government had wisely decided to outwait them until heat, exhaustion, and the end of the academic year would combine to empty Tiananmen Square.

Shanghai that afternoon looked much as it always does—a city smoky and dusty under a summer sun not yet as fierce as it would become, crowds in the streets, a continual blare from the horns of trucks and buses, and, as evening fell, a continual trill from the tens of thousands of bicycle bells as people made their way home in the twilight. My Chinese hosts put me up at the Jinjiang Hotel where Richard Nixon and Zhou Enlai had signed the Shanghai communiqué on February 1972, just as China was beginning to open up after the Cultural Revolution.

When my daughter telephoned on Sunday, it was the first I heard of the violence in Beijing that had begun a few hours earlier. Outside crowds were already gathering in the streets, and the first roadblocks were going up. A particularly large group had collected at the entrance to the Academy of Social Sciences, where the *World Economic Herald* had been published until its outspoken editor, Qin Benli, had been ousted by the government a month earlier. Over the next few days, photocopies of Chinese papers from Hong Kong were plastered up on walls and telephone poles, and they, along with reports from the Voice of America and the BBC, told of an ever increasing death toll: a hundred killed, several hundred, a thousand, several thousand. "Li Peng," read one, "when you have slaughtered a billion Chinese, will you be satisfied?" "Deng Xiaoping is China's new First Emperor," said another, referring to the tyrant who first united China in 221 B.C., and who, as the Chinese saying goes, buried scholars alive and burned their books. Foreigners were bombarded with questions: How much did we know? What would President Bush do to help? Why would he not do more? Was it true that Chinese diplomats in Washington had sided with the students? "If you want to keep your self-respect as a nation," a man told me in very precise English, "you must impose sanctions, pull out your investments, and break off relations with China."

Despite the roadblocks formed by buses and other vehicles, the protests were mostly peaceful. On Tuesday evening, however, a train ran a barricade that had cut rail traffic in Shanghai's outskirts, killing a number of students, and leading an enraged crowd to set it on fire. In Fudan University, a student told me, a Goddess of Liberty had been erected. The students demanded a "triple strike" (*san ba*)—of classes, of factories, of shops—but the most evident result was the sudden quiet that came to the city as traffic disappeared from the streets and the horns fell silent. The Peace Hotel and the Friendship Store, usually bursting with tourists, were as empty as tombs. Within a couple of days there were very few foreigners left at the Jinjiang; by then the foreign consulates and foreign embassies were advising their citizens to leave China, trying to find those in the interior and to get them out to the airports.

To say that the Chinese press and television told lies to their people would be too charitable. The night I left, a television program described troops patiently enduring vicious attacks before persuading students to leave the square peacefully and without incident. In sharp contrast, at my hotel it was as if the Chinese propaganda machine did not exist. A satellite link

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brought in American television broadcasts with their pictures of the bloody events of June 4, and the aftermath, with its rumors of civil war, of more casualties in other cities. Switch the channel and there was Yuan Mu, Beijing's spokesman, insisting to reporters that nothing much had happened. Every evening Chinese and English Hong Kong papers arrived by air and were sold out within minutes to those who wanted real news. Presumably it would have been easy for the authorities to stop them, easy for them to cut the reception of American television broadcasts, yet they did not. Were there those, as some have suggested, anxious to have the news get out?

On Thursday morning new posters were up, this time from the city government, threatening reprisals against any who disturbed the peace. Consulates were telling us in no uncertain terms to leave, and it was clear with the city disrupted that there was little chance of further work. I managed to fly down to Hong Kong that evening. There, too, there had been protest strikes and massive demonstrations. The signs of what had happened were all over the city: taxis with black streamers running from their aerials, buses carrying posters denouncing the Chinese leaders, student groups at the Star Ferry handing out pamphlets, raising money for the movement in China, and in a Kowloon store window, a computer programmed to repeat over and over again the four characters *Dadao Li Peng*! "Down with Li Peng!"

Hong Kong and Shanghai have very different pasts, yet certain themes bind them together historically. Sixty-five years ago, Shanghai seemed to point the way to China's future, a future of a modern economy, a modern industry, a modern society, and, for those on the left, a modern industrial proletariat to usher in the red dawn of socialism. It was not to be. When the city fell to Chiang Kai-shek's armies in 1927, he turned on his Communist and left-wing allies, slaughtering them, breaking up their labor unions, and driving his opponents underground—the White Terror, his opponents called it. Today Beijing justifies its repression by visions of the new white terror that would follow the victory of what it calls counterrevolution. Since the turn of the century, Shanghai's modern Chinese businessmen had done much to build up their city at a time when Beijing was too weak to interfere or to restrain them. Chiang's government, however, had more power at its disposal, and after 1927 Shanghai lost its old independence. A capricious master, Chiang was more interested in extracting revenues from the city than in encouraging an economic growth that might have challenged his regime. The desperate years of Japanese invasion and occupation during the war, of Nationalist reoccupation after 1945, finished the job. By May 1949, when the People's Liberation Army swept into the city, Shanghai had never fulfilled its earlier promise.

The theory of "one country, two systems" that Deng Xiaoping promises Hong Kong—that she can go her own way for fifty years after 1997—is not new. Thanks to its foreign administered enclaves protected from Chinese intervention, thanks, too, to Beijing's weakness before Chiang rose to power, Shanghai in the early twentieth century had gone its own way, building a system quite different from that of China as a whole. One should not romanticize the history of old Shanghai, a city that was often corrupt and often cruel. Yet left to itself it might have had a greater effect on China, on her search for wealth and power, her drive for modernization. It was not left to itself, however, and after 1949 the forces that were to drive the new China came not from the cities, but from the hinterland, from the peasant armies and the peasant unions on which Mao and his colleagues had built their power.

Today Hong Kong may hold the same promise for China's future that Shanghai once did. As Shanghai's physical appearance mirrors a past Western dominance, that of Hong Kong, with its great concrete and glass office buildings, mirrors the world of international trade and finance. Several years ago, a British businessman told me that the optimists in Hong Kong are those who think that after 1997 the Hong Kong spirit will spread gradually through China, encouraged by Deng's gradual opening of his country to the world. The pessimists, on the other hand, see China's backwardness and China's economic problems spreading like a wet gray blanket over Hong Kong itself. Look at Shanghai, they say, after forty years of the New China: for all its new joint ventures, for all its new office buildings and hotels, it remains a huge, ungainly city with an infrastructure desperately in need of renovation, of fundamental restructuring.

Neither Chiang nor the Communists left Shanghai alone. How will the Communists treat Hong Kong after 1997? The new head of the Chinese Communist Party, Jiang Zemin, is a former mayor of Shanghai, a man who made his reputation as a technocrat, who has tried to make Shanghai the economic bellwether of the People's Republic of China under Deng's open-door policy. Given Shanghai's problems, and the problems of the Chinese economy, not everyone would agree that he has succeeded. Nor would everyone agree that he will last long; in the thirteen years since Mao's death, his three predecessors have all been ousted. More ominously, Jiang seems to embody, like Deng and Li Peng, the contradictory desires for economic advance and continuing tight political controls; it is notable that the independent labor unions in Shanghai and Beijing this spring were quickly suppressed.

Yet Jiang faces a task even more difficult than that of his predecessors. It is not only that the summer's protests and foreign sanctions will hurt China's staggering economy. Moral authority has always counted for much in Chinese culture, in determining whether political power enjoys the legitimacy it needs for effective rule. Since June 4, Li Peng and his colleagues have lost that authority and restoring it will be no easy task. Even if it is true that communism is dead or dying, we must not assume that it is going to be a peaceful death. The massacre of June 4 proved once again that ruling cliques do not surrender power easily.

In Hong Kong today the building that dominates all others is Beijing's new Bank of China. Seventy stories high, designed as a shaft of blue-green glass by I.M. Pei, it towers above all its rivals, arrogantly oblivious to the scale of its geographical setting. Perhaps more than anything else in the city, it symbolizes the choice that Hong Kong may make or may be forced to make after 1997: either opening itself to the world, in which

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Hong Kong becomes a microcosm of the new China; or accepting the dominance of Beijing, in which China becomes a macrocosm of the new Hong Kong.

NICHOLAS R. CLIFFORD

Nicholas R. Clifford teaches Chinese history at Middlebury College, Vermont and is completing a book about foreigners in Shanghai in the 1920s.

REPORT ON THE HOLY OFFICE

INFLATING THE OATH

THE RULE MAKER BREAKS THE RULES

In March 1989, when they learned of the new formulation of the profession of faith and of a new oath of fidelity for those who assume offices in the church, many Catholics wondered, "What is the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith up to now?" A look at the document and its timing reveals some strange procedures and a failed attempt at rule making.

The action of the Holy Office (the former name for the Congregation is easier to use) was sudden and hasty. No one had asked for these changes, as far as we know, and no one was consulted about them; they came as a surprise to bishops' conferences and even to the other offices of the Curia. The document that contained them was unsigned. No one claimed responsibility or asserted authorization for it. The usual time between publication of such changes and the day they go into effect is three months. In this case it was five days. The official place for them to appear is the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. This document appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano* on February 25. Subsequently, it was issued in the *Acta*, which was predated to January 9. It seems to have been a hurried and clumsy business.

The document was quite brief: a short "note of presentation" in Italian and the new profession and oath in Latin. No purpose for the action was stated. No reasons were given for it. No abuses cited. No occasion mentioned. It is small wonder that the theological community reacted with "indignation" and "bewilderment" (see Robert McClory, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 17). The theologians carefully scrutinized the new formulas for the profession of faith and the oath of fidelity. They viewed them as snares, and they examined them as warily as foxes sniff traps. Pastors were even more suspicious; to many these formulas looked like truncheons which might be used to cudgel them into compliance.

The timing of the document was truly puzzling. Why did the Holy Office act in such obvious haste? Why the publication on February 25? Were they reacting to the Cologne declaration (see *Commonweal*, February 24, 1989) of January 27? Was motivation related to Charles Curran's lawsuit against Catholic University, decided on February 28? Was it a greeting for the American archbishops who came to Rome for a historic dialogue with Pope John Paul II, beginning March 8? There was speculation about all three.

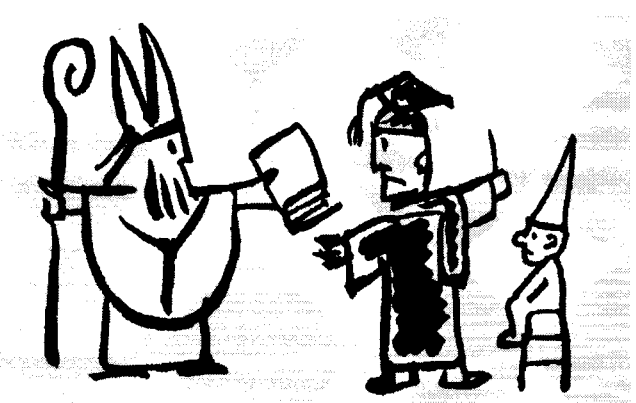
Most likely the Holy Office was trying to beat a March 1 deadline. That is the date that the latest reorganization of the Roman Curia went into effect. The legislation was in a papal constitution called *Pastor bonus*, issued in June of 1988. It didn't change the Curia very substantially, but one thing it did was establish a Council for the Interpretation of Legal Texts (formerly the Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code), which was to assist the other offices and congregations of the Curia in getting their executory decrees and instructions in proper form and in synchronization with existing laws. The Holy Office didn't want to deal with this "outside counsel"; it would have raised serious objections, so they rushed into print just before the deadline.

The Holy Office document did two things: (1) provided an altered text for the profession of faith, which is required of a whole list of people as they assume office in the church (from cardinals and bishops to pastors and deacons, seminary professors and theology teachers); (2) imposed an oath of fidelity, until now required only of bishops, on many of those same groups of people; a new text for that oath was provided.

To profess one's faith before the community as one assumes a church office is an ancient tradition. The heart of the profession was and remains the Nicene Creed (the one we use at Mass). Nothing new or ominous in that. The newness in the profession formula occurs at the end of the creed. The previous text added the following after the creed:

> I firmly embrace and accept all and everything which has been either defined by the church's solemn deliberations or affirmed and declared by its ordinary magisterium concerning the doctrine of faith and morals, according as they are proposed by it....

In place of this, the new document proposed three paragraphs "to better distinguish the type of truth [being proposed] and the corresponding assent asked" (note of presentation). Using the language of both Vatican Councils (I and II) and the *Code of Canon Law*, the text clearly distinguished between those truths that have been divinely revealed and proposed by the magisterium as such—to which the assent of faith is required—and those that are proclaimed by the magisterium as nondefinitive—to which a religious respect of intellect and will are due. Those two categories are commonly recognized. But in be-



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tween those two, the document interposed a third category: "I firmly embrace and hold all and everything which is definitively proposed by the church regarding faith and morals."

This statement caused considerable confusion. In traditional theological language something which is proposed *definitively* has been defined, either by a formal act (of, for example, an ecumenical council) or by the ordinary magisterium. The church is very sure about it. It is in no sense provisional, it is final; it has been permanently settled. It is to be accepted and firmly held.

What kind of teachings does the Holy Office think are included in this middle category? Perhaps a basic principle of the natural law, the taking of innocent life, for example, or the church's long-time practice of infant baptism? Not so. At the time the document appeared, the Holy Office consultor, Umberto Betti, O.F.M., explaining the document on Vatican Radio, gave as an example of this category of truths the papal teaching on birth control as contained in the encyclical *Humanae vitae*! Very few theologians would consider that teaching "definitively proposed." With very rare exceptions, even those who consider the teaching correct, courageous, and prophetic do not claim that it is defined. It is in the same category as the condemnation of usury, the toleration of slavery, the teaching on church and state. Either Betti was woefully mistaken or the Holy Office is trying to expand this theological category to include particular applications of the moral law, and thus to consider them "definitively proposed." Heretofore nondefined teachings can now be considered definitively proposed, and hence required to be embraced and held.

An oath of fidelity is very different from a profession of faith. Taking an oath means calling upon God to witness the truth of what is sworn. It is what we do when we testify in court under oath: "I swear to tell the truth...so help me God." An oath of fidelity upon assuming an office is a promissory oath calling upon God to witness my sincerity in promising to carry out the duties of my office faithfully. It is an exercise of the virtue of religion. It goes beyond the demands of justice, i.e., to fulfill the obligations of office. To swear falsely means to perjure oneself. To take an oath of fidelity in office insincerely adds perjury to duplicity, and perjury is a punishable offense in canon law just as it is in civil law.

The text of the oath calls upon the officeholder to promise to preserve communion, to fulfill the duties of office in relation to the universal and particular church, to preserve and hand on the deposit of faith, to follow and foster the discipline of the church, and to go along with what the bishops teach and direct.

The Holy Office imposed the obligation to swear such an oath on pastors, seminary professors, teachers of disciplines related to faith and morals, those to be ordained deacons, and others—at the time they assume office. It was an entirely new burden laid on all these groups of people. It was a new obligation, a new law, not simply the application or interpretation of an existing law.

The most remarkable thing about the oath of fidelity is that the Holy Office acted beyond its authority in attempting to impose it. Congregations of the Roman Curia are administrative agencies. They do not possess legislative authority. In this respect they resemble the administrative agencies of our government; they can issue regulations about laws, but they cannot make new laws. To enact laws or issue general decrees congregations require the approval of the Supreme Pontiff. And that approval must be manifested in the document of issuance, otherwise the subjects cannot verify the authenticity of the legislation. The Holy Office document bore no sign of papal approval.

The Holy Office acted *ultra vires*. The result is that the subject groups have no obligation to swear the oath of fidelity.

This was not the finest hour for the Holy Office. The Congregation is entrusted with safeguarding and promoting the doctrine of the faith. With this hasty and ill-conceived action, in one fell swoop it spread pastoral apprehension and theological confusion, and, in disregard of canon law (which the oath itself forbade), it vainly attempted to impose an oath of fidelity on church officials.

JAMES A. CORIDEN

Rev. James A. Coriden, a canonist, is academic dean at Washington Theological Union and co-editor of The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary *(Paulist).*

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

BILLY BRINGS 'EM IN

PREACHING A RELEVANT MINISTRY

It isn't what comes to mind when you hear of one of Billy Graham's evangelistic campaigns—that it might stimulate clerical vocations in the Church of England. But that is exactly what the English bishops were hoping for when he launched his crusade in London this June. The canon in charge of recruitment was forthright about it when interviewed by the *Times*. The number of applicants for clergy formation had been going down—from 900 to 800 in the past year alone.

"The last time the Reverend Mr. Graham preached here we had a significant increase in those applying," he added hopefully. These had come not so much from the ranks of those preached to but from the local volunteer counselors. Those who have watched Billy Graham preaching on television may have a vivid memory of the emotional finale of each evening when hearers are urged to come forward to accept Jesus. What they may not remember is that those who do so are also urged to make a commitment to a church, either to the one of their youth or another. The counselors are there to help them do that.

This practice has set Mr. Graham's

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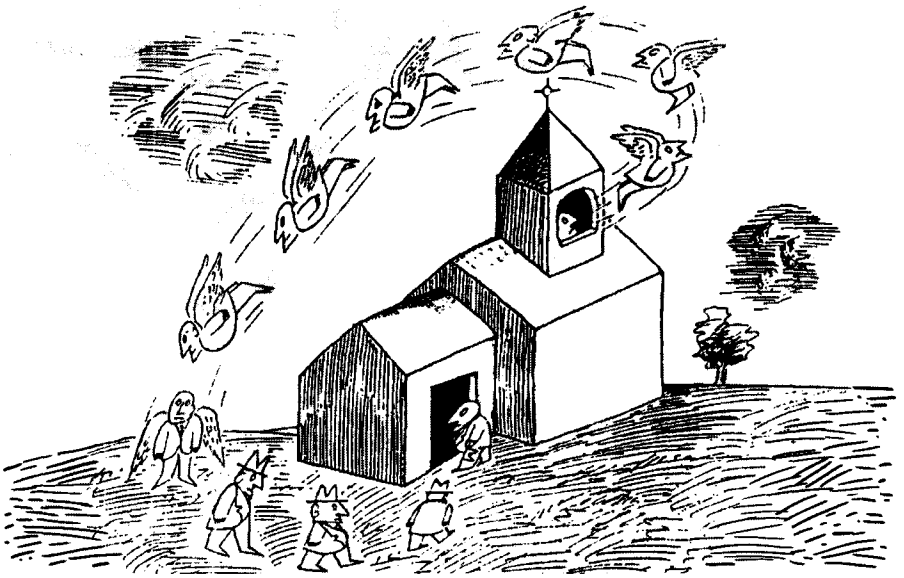

evangelism apart from that of more narrow gospel preachers and has earned him the cooperation of the main-line churches. Despite the national outreach of each Graham campaign; despite the sophisticated preliminary advertising, the elaborate organization, and extensive staff; despite the music and the showmanship, each crusade has much in common with old-time parish retreats, as it has with old-time gospel meetings.

The purpose is the same: To stir up fervor, to rescue sinners and fallen-aways, to promote a personal relationship with the Savior. And the delivery of the message is not too different: the rousing, impassioned affirmation of the basic tenets of Christianity; the threat of hell and promise of heaven; the assurance of the abiding love of Jesus for his own. One could say that Billy Graham has become retreat master to the world.

The Anglican counselors found that they could help people seeking God, that they could bring them to the church; and they discovered great satisfaction in doing so. As unlikely as American gospel meetings might seem as seedbeds for a crop of future curates, vicars, and canons for England's established church, that is what Graham's meetings have been. How many little churches all over England—places with names like Church Brampton and Chapel Brampton—have as pastors men who were inspired by the man from a Bible college in Minneapolis?

Are there any conclusions we can draw from the above about vocations to the priesthood in general? Certainly some tentative ones. That there has been such a precipitous falling off in recent years in the Church of England, in which there is no law of celibacy, underlines what we already know—that failing to see the priesthood as relevant in today's world, or as ministering to the truly needy of body and spirit, deters vocations just as much as does the prohibition of marriage. I recall an English priest saying to me in the sixties, "The churches in America are lucky to have been revitalized and made needed by the civil rights movement, but this sense of uselessness will catch up with them, too."

The Vatican seems to have reached such a conclusion. The document just issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education calls for more training of seminarians in modern social problems in order to prepare them to be effective in the modern world. It suggests a study program covering issues such as terrorism and guerrilla warfare, the environment, East-West relations, human rights, the third world, and the international economy.

Archbishop Jose Saraiva Martins, secretary of the Congregation, is quoted as saying that in many seminaries there was only "a dim approximate idea" of the social doctrine of the church. The document also recommended that priests in training have contact with business executives, workers and trade unions, social organizations, and the "marginalized sectors" of society, by which I suppose is meant the poor and homeless, minorities—perhaps even women.

Those of us who remember post-Vatican II American seminarians demonstrating, riding in police cars to learn the city, and in ambulances to learn about suffering, and those who recall the worker priests of France, are aware that it is necessary to prepare a priest for immersion in his people's world. For many, the shock of reality was too profound and the bridge to the rectory too fragile to sustain the connection.

Perhaps the simple lesson to be learned from the experience of the Graham crusade counselors is that one does not minister to multitudes but to one person at a time, if the love of Christ is to be communicated. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

TAKE A STAND, OR SEVERAL

ON NOT BEING NONJUDGMENTAL

Years ago I discovered what countless other teachers have discovered—a cheap and easy trick for stimulating discussion among my college students. I would simply say something calculated to outrage their beliefs and values; they would protest; and a lively classroom discussion was under way.

Recently, I have found that this cheap trick no longer works well. Students have become more tolerant of views that differ from their own. If I suggest, for instance,

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that there is something to be said on behalf of cannibalism, provided it is practiced in moderation, or that Hitler has been given a bad rap, my students, while they are not likely to agree with me, are not willing to get into an argument with me, either. If I wish to hold weird opinions, well, that's my business. This is America, after all, and everyone is entitled to his or her own views, no matter how peculiar they may be; and if we don't want other people telling us what we should believe, then we shouldn't stick our noses into other people's business and tell them what to believe. We are not the keepers of the beliefs and values of our brothers and sisters.

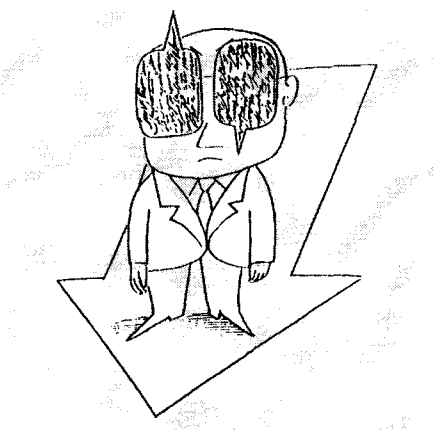
There are two kinds of tolerance: the tolerance of the believer and that of the skeptic. The tolerant believer is prepared to put up with views that he or she seriously believes to be mistaken, perhaps even dangerous. This is not an easy kind of tolerance to achieve; it requires a lively conviction of the dignity and autonomy of the other; for only such a conviction can sustain a willingness to put up with what the believer earnestly believes to be an erroneous and potentially harmful position. Tolerance is much easier to achieve for the skeptic; for since skeptics themselves have no beliefs, it makes no difference to them what others believe, all beliefs being equally invalid.

The tolerance of my current students is the easy tolerance of the skeptic, not the difficult tolerance of the believer. It isn't exactly that these students have no beliefs; no one, after all, can live devoid of beliefs. But they don't hold their beliefs as propositions that are objectively valid; instead, they hold them as a set of mere personal preferences. In the old days the statement, "I believe X," was a statement about the world; and if you said, "I believe Y," then one of us at least must be wrong. But nowadays "I believe X" is a statement about myself, about one of my preferences; and if you say, "I believe Y," that only means you have a different preference; so we're both right, and there's nothing to argue about.

The advantage of skeptical tolerance is, of course, that it makes it easy for people to live together in a pluralistic, individualistic society. We can all march to different drummers and no one gets confused, for no one pays any attention to any drummer but his or her own.

But the great disadvantage, at least in the long run, is that this skepticism erodes the very basis of social life. Society, after all, is not simply a collection of people in the same neighborhood; it is people living in accordance with certain shared beliefs and values. In a modern society, consensus does not have to be terribly specific and detailed; it can exist at a high level of abstraction. But exist it must. Yet the existence of even a very abstract consensus is undermined and eventually destroyed by the spread of skepticism—or by the spread of an attitude that holds all beliefs and values to be mere preferences, rather than objectively valid propositions.

Recall the etymology of the word



"republic." It derives from "the public thing"—as opposed to private things: the public interest as opposed to private interests. But the public interest cannot be sustained without publicly shared beliefs and values. Skepticism and republicanism are enemies of one another. Little wonder that the growth of skepticism in recent times coincides with a serious decline in voter participation in the U.S.

Every so often I run into someone a generation or so older than today's college students, who describes himself or herself (more frequently herself, since women seem more inclined toward this self-description than men) as "nonjudgmental."

I never fail to be irritated, if only mildly, by this self-description, for such folks are not the least bit nonjudgmental. I have yet to come across a self-confessed nonjudgmentalist who was not full of judgments—about morals, manners, clothing, automobiles, furniture, architecture, books, movies, etc. At a minimum, every nonjudgmentalist judges that being "nonjudgmental" is a good thing, being "judgmental," bad. When a person describes herself as nonjudgmental, she doesn't think of her nonjudgmentalism as being on the same plane as her other attributes: 5'4", or forty-six years old, or American. These latter descriptions are simply facts about the person, and in reciting them no reproach is implied against someone who is, say, 6'1", thirty-five years old, and Canadian. The nonjudgmentalist does not regard her nonjudgmentalism as being a mere fact about herself, like a birthmark or a phobia. She regards it as a moral ideal that she has attained and that others ought to attain; and to the degree they don't, they are imperfect.

Middle-aged people who talk about being nonjudgmental really aren't. The true nonjudgmentalists are to be found among the young, who don't talk about it. Why should they talk about it? For to talk about it is to boast about it, as though it were a virtue. But for the truly nonjudgmental person, even nonjudgmentalism is not a virtue; it is just a fact.

I have, in my judgmental way, three suggestions for middle-aged people who have fallen into the bad habit of describing themselves (erroneously) as nonjudgmental. First, drop this description, not only because it is inaccurate, but even more because it sets a bad example for the young, who often listen to what we say without observing that our actions don't always suit our words; it encourages them in their antisocial attitude of skepticism. Second, find a more accurate name for the virtue you have hitherto called "nonjudgmentalism." Call it tolerance or sympathy or broad-mindedness or liberalism: anything but nonjudgmentalism. Calling things by their right names is, next to fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom. Finally, increase and multiply your judgments indefinitely. For human beings the point is not to avoid judgments, which would be an absurd ideal; the point is to avoid bad judgments and to achieve sound ones; and the more of these latter, the better. □

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HAS GOD FORGOTTEN PERU?

POVERTY, COCAINE, & TERROR

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

The first thing that hits you in Lima is the smell—industrial smog trapped in the perpetual cloud cover; exhaust fumes; the urine of millions of men and dogs; the piles of garbage, mounting during a strike, smoldering, smoking in the night.

Indeed, there are four strikes going on during my visit—garbage collectors, hospital doctors, gravediggers, and construction workers. The Peruvians, at least on the surface, seem to endure this with the same equanimity that they endure their triple national crisis: economic chaos characterized by extreme poverty and inflation headed toward 10,000 percent; a $2.4 billion traffic in illegal cocaine; and an escalating, frustrating war against two terrorist armies—the small, Marxist Revolutionary Movement Tapac Amaru (MRTA), active in the jungles, and the larger, 2,000-5,000 coldblooded Maoist, mostly teenage, peasants, with 15,000 deaths to their credit, called *Sendero Luminoso*, the Shining Path. The minister of justice, Cesar Delgado, describes this crisis as the worst since Peru's "War of the Pacific," lost to Chile and Britain, a hundred years ago.

Meanwhile, the traveler has been warned. Don't hike the famed Inca Trail; in May, terrorists killed a twenty-five-year-old British tourist. Don't drive on country roads. Take the tourist train, not the local train, to the ruins at Machu Picchu. Hide your cash and passport in a money belt. Hide your camera. Carry your knapsack in front of you or thieves will slash it off your back!

The Plaza de Armas, Lima's heart, is in front of the archbishop's palace and the cathedral, where Francisco Pizarro's bones rest with his head in one box and his body in another, and a huge seventeenth-century painting depicts a royal succession of Inca kings leading up to Charles V of Spain. Only foreigners with passports are allowed to cross to the fountain in the center of the square facing the Government Palace on the other side.

Inside the palace President Alan Garcia, whose dizzy four-year reign is sputtering to a close, meets with his advisers. In 1985, with dazzling anti-American rhetoric, he had presented himself as a fresh spokesman for the third world. In 1989 his failure to develop a coherent economic policy, his unexpected nationalization of the banks, and his manic-depressive mood swings have left him with very little support as his country disintegrates before his eyes.

At the corner of the plaza, an army tank armed with a water cannon stands ready to break up demonstrations. (In June, terrorists blew up a bus, killing six presidential guards.) In another part of town terrorists bomb a tour bus filled with Russian sailors and injure five. Perhaps it is because Russia sells Peru the helicopters that swoop down on terrorist enclaves. Within the week, the army has killed thirty-nine terrorists in a raid.

This night, in an exercise of violence that borders on ritual, the *Sendero* enters a little town in Puno and, after a mock public trial, executes the district governor, the mayor, and the justice of the peace. Unlike the army or police, they do not rape or steal and they do not smoke or drink. They gather the trembling populace in the town square and harangue them about the absolute corruption of the government—something these poor peasants have experienced all their lives—and about how the

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annihilation of the present state will lead to a Communist utopia. The executioner could be a sixteen-year-old girl and the hooded leader a twenty-two-year-old graduate of the University of Ayacucho, where the movement first filled an intellectual and moral vacuum in the 1960s. As historian Jeffrey Klaiber, S.J., points out, the heart of the problem is the failure of the educational system, including the traditional religious catechesis, to provide an alternative "social glue." As a result, *Sendero* recruits are young people with "no intellectual vision of the world and no vision of hope."

Sendero targets, as a matter of principle, are authority figures—any source of unity and stability in a mixed culture. This is an ancient civilization but a young country; with its white-skinned Spanish elite and impoverished and despised Indian peasants, it has yet to weld itself into a modern nation. *Sendero* targets also include priests: in 1987, a conservative priest who was shot in the back while saying Mass with his back to the people, and in June a twenty-nine-year-old priest who dared to protest their murdering a mayor.

Inside the palace, perhaps they are discussing the July issue of the influential economic and political monthly, *The Peru Report*. Based on aerial photos and a study by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, the report charges that Enaco, the state-owned coca company, has covered up 40,000 hectares of illegal crops, four times the crop Enaco had ever admitted to or any foreign observer has been able to detect. In the meantime the administration enters an agreement with the U.S. to wage war with American aid on illegal coca production in the north. Says Raul Carranza, outgoing president of Enaco and a friend of Garcia: We grow just enough coca for Indians to chew and to export for medicine. Says an unnamed UN researcher: friends of Garcia—who, constitutionally, cannot be reelected in 1990—may be stashing away cocaine profits to finance his return in 1995.

For Luis Bustamante Belaunde, a strong Catholic, law professor at the University of the Pacific, nephew of former president Jose Luis Bustamante Rivero (1945-1948), and adviser and spokesman for *Libertad* (one of the three right and center-right parties united under the umbrella group, *Fredemo* (Democratic Front), the man to restore order is his friend, internationally acclaimed novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, author of *Conversations in the Cathedral*, *The War of the End of the World*, and *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, a story based on his first marriage, at nineteen, to his twenty-nine-year-old aunt.

A Communist when he wrote his first, partly autobiographical, novel, *The Time of the Hero*, which indicts the regime of the dictator Manuel Odria through the story of the cover-up of a cadet murder in a military school, Llosa moved to the right in reaction against the Soviet Union and Castro's violations of the freedom of expression. In 1987, with no previous political experience, Llosa suddenly led a rally in Plaza San Martin protesting Garcia's nationalization of the banks. Today his platform, insofar as he has developed one, echoes the insights of Fernando DeSoto, director of the Institute for Freedom and Democracy. DeSoto's widely read book, *The Other Path* (Harper & Row, 1989), attempts to rechannel the frustrated energies of the Peruvian people from terrorism and street crime into a reorganized, liberated economy. *The Other Path* attacks "mercantilism," the economic alliance between the state and business and social elites, which so stifles initiative with bureaucracy and corruption that it can take an entrepreneur 289 days and ten bribes just to register a new small factory. It offers as model and metaphor the "informal" economy, the black market, which, because it freely defies law and red tape, now produces 40 percent of the gross domestic product and, for example, provides 90 percent of Lima's public transportation. Critics of the book say DeSoto sugarcoats the "informal" economy, which includes cutthroat practices and sweatshop working conditions.

Beyond DeSoto, *Libertad*'s first priority is to pacify the country by backing the army in an all-out war against the subversives and arming the civilian population to defend itself; then to bring back foreign investors whom Garcia has alienated; to apply the familiar medicines of liberal capitalism: to privatize state companies, simplify, deregulate, decentralize.

To his critics, Llosa is a "flake," "more music than words," more European than Peruvian in vision and temperament, a man who doesn't understand his own country—with no idea how Indian peasants have organized themselves to survive; a tool of his ambitious second wife and their son; the Reaganesque instrument of right-wing manipulators and Lima yuppies using him to regain the status snatched from them during the reformist regime of the military socialist president General Juan Velasco Alvarado in the early 1970s. Some wonder, too, whether his creative, erotic imagination—*The Time of the Hero* concerns a cadet who writes pornography and sells it to his friends—is suited for national leadership.

Some call Llosa an "atheist," and I point out to Bustamante in a private meeting that many of Llosa's images of religion are grotesque. Llosa rejects the "atheist" label. "Faith is a gift which I do not have," Bustamante quotes Llosa as saying; yet he has never heard him denigrate or joke about religion. Furthermore, Llosa is, says Bustamante, a profoundly "Christian" person in that he is absolutely honest and sacrifices himself for others. Unlike other politicians, he would never exploit religion for political gain. As we speak, Llosa is still in Spain, where he fled to sulk after temporarily—and strategically—"withdrawing" his candidacy for president when his supporters could not even agree on tactics for the November municipal elections. Yet, there is a good chance he will be the next president of Peru.

Meanwhile, the situation is so volatile few will confidently predict that the municipal elections and/or the May 1990 presidential elections will ever take place. All over the country, hundreds of mayors and village councilors are abandoning their posts in fear. What if the military determine that Peru needs another coup? And what if a presidential candidate is killed? The probable left candidate, the pragmatic Alphonso Barrantes, has remarked that he is reluctant to become another Salvador Allende.

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Tom Vogel, twenty-three, first came to Peru to write a Holy Cross College undergraduate thesis on the Peruvian church, then returned in November 1988 as a staff writer for *The Peru Report*. Like many foreign observers, he came expecting the church to present a unified "liberation theology" message on behalf of the poor. He found instead a fragmented church—old-line conservatives who had Mass in Latin; "new" conservatives, like *Opus Dei* "yuppies" and the *Sodalitium Vitae Cristianae*, made up of affluent families hostile to liberation theology; various other groupings, including the parishes led by foreigners, like progressive Maryknollers and the more traditional Society of Saint James, who make up the majority of the Peruvian clergy. Like many foreigners who come here and stay, and who understand the extreme complexity of Peruvian society, Vogel has deep respect for the Peruvian people—their pride in their work; their ability, without being "carefree," to enjoy life with what they have without becoming bitter about what they have not. He resents sensationalized stories on the Shining Path in the American press and he is haunted by the faces of starving children, like the ten-year-old—whose mother had killed herself and whose father had abandoned him—who hauled his sleeping mat of corn husks around looking for a safe place to rest where he wouldn't be beaten by the other kids.

At the village church in Pisac, a little bustling market village in the Sacred Valley, an hour from Cuzco, the southern capital of the Inca Empire which once reached from Ecuador to Chile, the racket from the thousands of buyers and sellers in the town square drowns out the drone of the native priest's homily. About a hundred villagers—men on the left, women and children on the right—and twenty tourists passively watch the Mass, the altar partly obscured by the white canopy over the towering Lady of Mount Carmel doll perched between the altar and the congregation. As the service rushes to its conclusion, there is no Communion. Rather, a man carries a crucifix through the congregation for all the men—not the women—to kiss. Then, after Mass, the priest comes to the foot of the altar where the women may kneel before him and kiss the hem of his stole.

In the barrio of Santa Isabella on the bare, dusty mountainside southeast of Lima, Margaret Robichaud, a Sister of Charity from Nova Scotia, leads two visitors up and down the rocky streets of the slums, where nearly two million people, about a third of Lima's population, live. They have fled the poverty and violence of the countryside, literally "invading" abandoned land in the middle of the night and setting up instant straw huts which, over several years, they sometimes ingeniously develop into decent, suburban-style homes.

It is siesta time and the only sounds are the yapping of dogs and the honk of the water truck which roars up the hillside, pausing at box-like, cement water tanks in front of some of the homes. In the summer, the trucks go first to the wealthy homes by the beach, leaving no water for the poor. The poor must take a bus for an hour and beg the trucks to come back and serve them. In a third grade schoolroom, Margaret embraces the fourteen women who meet for their knitting club. On the street, a young girl runs up to report on her exam. At the soup kitchen, twenty families pool their rice and money and, with donations from the church, feed themselves and a few more. Rosario, who operates a small store, shows off her four little dogs; her teenage daughter wants to go to medical school.

The smell of baking bread, to be ready at four, wafts up the street, and a tiny boy, clutching money in his fist, toddles down the hill to buy some. Margaret has heard that seventy children in the barrios die every day. Whenever that happens, the family rents a bus to drive with the corpse to the cemetery outside town for a burial and a picnic, combined. For Margaret, the most difficult thing is that conditions keep getting worse: there is so much misery and there are so few resources, she feels helpless. This afternoon, on the other side of town, a hut catches fire and three children burn to death in fifteen minutes.

On the water tank in front of the Bodega Virgin Del Carmen, someone has scrawled in large, barely intelligible letters, *"Gratias por Tud Deceos Dios...Tarda per non olvida."* Freely translated it means: "We thank you, God, for all the gifts that you have given us. Sometimes they arrive late, but you do not forget us." □

Margaret Mangan

The Poor

For years they have gone without eyes.
If we come and drop eyes onto their plates,
they eat them in their ignorance.

For decades they have flushed their teeth
into rain gutters, preferring slow sounds,
trying to get away from their own violence.
What can you do with such people.

Some of them grow orchids in their bathtubs.
Others try to sleep in trees, where it is safe.
Very few own bootstraps.
Many are celebratory, despite everything.
What is the use.

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THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF HOMOSEXUALS

LET CATHOLICS BE CONSISTENT

GORDON C. ZAHN

Prudence might dictate that an already notorious Catholic peacenik should steer clear of getting involved in other controversial debates with ecclesiastical leaders, but there are times when prudence must give way. The basic human rights of homosexuals, male and female, coupled with the refusal of the Catholic church to fulfill what should be seen as a moral responsibility to support legislation aimed at protecting those rights strikes me as one of those times. I am writing about a particular case, the opposition of the Catholic bishops in Massachusetts to present efforts in the state's legislature to amend the state's civil rights laws to add sexual orientation to the law's current antidiscrimination measures. Joseph Craven described the situation accurately when he wrote recently in the Boston *Pilot*: "In near quixotic fashion, virtually alone in public opposition to the bill, stands the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, an organization which formally represents the four Roman Catholic dioceses of Massachusetts, and which has opposed the measure each time it has come before the legislature" (March 10, 1989). After reading his assessment, I decided to write to the four ordinaries and their auxiliaries who make up the Massachusetts Catholic Conference.

My exchange of correspondence with the bishops, though friendly and even gracious in tone, did not succeed in either side convincing the other of the validity of our positions. It seems appropriate, then, to open the matter to broader discussion concentrating not, as is too often the case, on the morality of homosexual preference and practice but, instead, on the inviolability of those persons' essential human rights. The focus on the Massachusetts situation may set it apart from approaches taken by other dioceses in which similar legislation has been, or is, at issue. Be that as it may, I suspect that the position of the Massachusetts bishops—and, even more important, the arguments presented to support it—reflect a common opinion among Catholics.

A personal note: the product of an innocent age and a "sheltered" childhood, my enlightenment about the issue of homosexuality did not come until, as a young man, I read the press reports of Hitler's 1934 *Roehm putsch* and *der Fuehrer's* dramatic broadcast justifying his drastic action in terms of the homosexuality rampant in the ranks of the SA. What I learned shocked me deeply. But what was clear to me then, and remains just as clear today, is that no matter how serious a violation of religious values or public sensibilities homosexuality may be, it could never justify the wanton destruction of human life that marked that dreadful "night of the long knives."

Nor can it justify the denial of other basic human rights. No rational person, I am sure, would propose Hitler's answer, a "sanitizing" massacre of this nation's homosexual minority. On the other hand, should a rampaging mob of irrational extremists take it upon themselves to mount a violent assault upon Fire Island, San Francisco, or one of the other reputed cesspools of depravity, I have little doubt that much of the respectable disapproval that would certainly be voiced would be tempered by hints of shared, though prudently unspoken, understanding. The pious affirmations that existing civil rights legislation provides protection enough for homosexuals simply do not stand up to the test of the empirical fact of frequent, though not always reported, episodes of "gay-bashing." Even when these are reported and the guilty brought to trial, judges have been known to express such "understanding" in their sentencing practices.

Until the agencies of public order extend the protection of existing legislation to the homosexual population, they will not be meeting their responsibility. The denial of housing, occupational, or any other opportunities essential to meeting one's needs or developing one's capacities simply because the disadvantaged individual belongs to an unpopular "category" constitutes a failure of society itself to serve the purposes or perform the functions for which it exists.

Catholic social theory is rooted in what my old professor, Heinrich Rommen, called "the perennial philosophy." The Socratic sequence developed by Plato in his *Republic* remains valid: since the existential needs (not to mention higher aims and accomplishments) of human beings cannot be met in isolation, it becomes necessary for them to enter into mutually beneficial interaction with others of their kind. It is this that explains and justifies the emergence and development of what we call "society" with its division of labor, its institutions, its network of interpersonal relationships. "The Good Society" so dear to Catholic moral/social theory is one which enables all its members to meet those needs and fulfill their capacities; it

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follows that the successes or failures of actual societies are measured by the extent to which they meet or fall short of that ideal. Any society which imposes, or even permits, structured inequalities to exist and interfere with those purposes is an unjust society and should be recognized as such.

In my correspondence with the bishops and in their public statements, they explain their opposition to legislation aimed at eliminating the structured inequalities to which individuals of homosexual orientation are being subjected in our society in terms of the presumed threat such legislation presents to the institution of the family as "the basic unit of society." This argument rests upon a sociological fallacy. In the sociological context, the family is the intimate network of personal interrelationships performing necessary services (nutritional, protective, educational, etc.) for its members and, as such, is rightly regarded as the "basic *social* unit" and essential to the proper functioning of the greater society and the other social institutions. It is not, however, the basic unit of society. That distinction belongs to the person.

Catholic theology thrives on—might well collapse without—its finely honed distinctions. For the church and its leaders to miss so obvious and crucial a distinction is difficult to understand. Worse still, to translate that logical failing into political activity, as it has done in this instance, is to betray an indispensable element of its sacred mission: the responsibility to seek justice, to teach justice, and, above all, to promote and practice justice.

Some of Catholicism's treasured achievements and moments of greatest heroism center upon the defense of the ultimate worth and dignity of the person when these are disregarded or violated by society and its institutions, including, at times, the institution of the family. Missionary experience tells us of family patterns in some social orders and cultural systems which permit the selling or abandonment of children, freely provide the sexual favors of its members as a mark of hospitality, and in many other ways abuse what we recognize as individual human rights. Such families are no less the "basic social units" of such misguided societies.

If, as would almost certainly be the case, the Catholic church would do everything in its power to protect those members against such abuse, it would be acting in recognition of the truth that the persons so protected are more "basic" than the offending social unit to which they belong.

But the problem goes beyond failed distinctions and slippery logic. Instead, what is involved in the opposition to the proposed legislation is best described as "classic homophobia" disguised by a thin veneer of sanctimonious rhetoric. It begins with the frequently expressed fear that explicit recognition of the rights of homosexuals will be interpreted as an official endorsement of homosexuality and, by inference, homosexual practices. Episcopal arguments may not match the crudity of some debates heard in legislative chambers or the panic expressed by a Catholic woman in her testimony before a Maine legislative committee ("The minute the gay rights bill passes,

they will come out of their school closets, propagandizing, brainwashing and indoctrinating our children and youth, and an increased number will begin brazenly to entice, recruit and in some cases even molest...."), but the fears, though more subtly put, are there.

Given the tenor of public opinion and attitudes which account for the problem of prejudice and discrimination in the first place, it strains credulity to expect any elected legislature to write such encouragement into law. If some specific proposal were worded even so as to imply endorsement, or if overly enthusiastic spokespersons of the homosexual community were to make such a claim, it should be a simple matter for religious leaders with the extensive legal resources available to them to come forward with a substitute proposal correcting that flaw while still accomplishing the necessary purpose of protecting human rights that are now being violated or denied.

The expectation that the passage of such legislation would result in an upsurge of rampant homosexuality is no less fanciful. It oversimplifies to regard homosexuality as the product of a permissive atmosphere or social contagion, to be controlled or quarantined. We must assume instead that the homosexual orientation is the product of the same complex of determinants that makes each of us the unique person he or she is at any point in the life cycle. Genetic endowment certainly plays a part, but this does not mean that homosexuals are "born, not made." The capacity or the potential is undoubtedly present from the earliest stages, but, for all we know, this may be true for most members of the human species. Unless we are to subscribe to the biological determinism we reject in other contexts, reason tells us a more complex process is at work, involving all the forces of developmental maturation operating in a particular physical and social environment in combination with the individual's unique and unplanned life experiences.

Nor is it the product of easily won "conversion," as the fears of opponents to the proposed legislation would suggest. There is no denying, of course, that access to previously denied rights and equality will lead to broadened perspectives and associations. This was the outcome, a most beneficial outcome, of black integration in the aftermath of the civil rights crusade. It is possible, too, that eliminating present restrictions on full and equal social participation for homosexuals could lead to the expression of previously repressed inclinations and exposure to temptations that could weaken cherished values and standards. To that extent the change would present a very real challenge to the church (and here the family does have a distinct role to play) to develop and undertake more effective programs of moral

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education and conscience formation. To rely instead on the continued denial of basic human rights is not an acceptable answer.

Perhaps the most far-fetched argument offered in justification of the church's official opposition was the suggestion that, if such laws were to pass, seminaries might be forced to accept homosexuals as candidates for the Catholic priesthood. Quite apart from the obvious fact that, even without the benefit of the proposed legislation, homosexuals do become priests, there is no reason to believe that public authority would, or could, intrude upon a religious community's right to define qualifications for its ministers. After all, the existing laws whose protections would be extended to homosexuals do make explicit provision for women's rights, and there is no evidence that the strong and well-organized movement for the ordination of women has used these laws as a vehicle for advancing its cause.

A far more troubling aspect to this particular objection, however, deserves comment. It implies a weakness of faith in the graces provided by the Holy Spirit in the unspoken assumption that a sincere acceptance and observance of the vows of priestly celibacy, which is taken for granted in the ordination of heterosexuals, is somehow beyond the spiritual capability of homosexuals. By stressing the categorical exclusion it also gives the lie to the pious affirmation that it is not the homosexual orientation but only homosexual practices that the church condemns.

In this, of course, religious leaders are no better and no worse than the majority of those they are called to lead. They react with appropriate horror and indignation to reports of sexual abuse against children committed by homosexuals—as, indeed, everyone must. What is generally overlooked, however, is that most sex crimes reported in the daily press are committed by heterosexuals and this, I am confident, would be true even when corrected for proportion-controlled comparison.

Teen-age pregnancies and their attendant social problems, not to mention the shocking escalation of cases involving young children—including infants—who are sexually abused, even raped, by parents, are, one might say by definition, the victims of heterosexual lust. This is not surprising when one considers the omnipresent emphasis on sex, often bordering on pornography, encountered in the entertainment media and the advertise-

George's story

It was one of those blustery Washington days poised between the last damp gasps of fall and the frigidity of winter. As I waited at the Catholic University Metro stop I remember thinking that winter would win out this time. I rode to Medical Center and made my way to Building 10 at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda where I worked with the Catholic chaplain's office in ministry to people with AIDS. On that particular day I had a lighter patient load than usual and decided to follow up on a patient with whom I had visited in the past but who was transferred to another floor.

When I first knocked on the door the nurse invited me in and explained the patient I was looking for had been discharged. There was another man in the bed who had a washcloth over his face, and I realized that the attendants were giving him a bath. I apologized for the interruption. From under the cloth the young man, who heard the nurse say something about my being a chaplain, asked if I would return later to talk. I returned about a half hour later.

I knocked on the door and heard a quiet voice invite me into the sparsely lit room. The sign on the door indicated that visitors should wear a gown and gloves, an unusual procedure in visiting AIDS patients at NIH. I soon came to realize that this was for the patient's protection, not mine.

As I entered the room I introduced myself and asked if it was a good time for a visit. George said that it was, so I approached the bed. When I caught my first glimpse of George, I remember feeling as though I was in a slow-motion movie. It was hard at first to make out what it was I was seeing. Finally I realized that this young man's face was barely visible beneath blisters and lesions. Other than his head and parts of his shoulders, his whole body was under the sheets. He kept very still.

I felt frightened, yet I managed to say, "I am sorry to have to wear these gloves and this gown, but I wouldn't want to risk your getting an infection from me."

"That's okay. I'm getting used to it. Everyone who comes in has to wear them."

"Are you comfortable?" I asked.

"Yes, now that I have had a bath. It is very difficult to move though. I have to be very slow about it or I end up leaving some skin in the sheets. I just try to stay as still as possible and watch TV or something. I can't talk on the phone very easily either."

I came to find out that part of George's immediate situation was due to a bad reaction to an experimental drug. From the top of his head to the soles of his feet, his lips, his eyelids, his ears, almost every part of his body appeared as though it had passed through an open flame. This reaction was in addition to the Kaposi's sarcoma lesions which had previously spread throughout his body, the direct result of the breakdown of his immune system from the AIDS infection.

That day George told me some very strange and beautiful things. He reflected on how he had always been afraid of pain and that prior to his diagnosis with AIDS, about eight months previous, he had never even been in a hospital

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ments which assault our senses at almost every turn; but these, too, are overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, heterosexual in tone, presentation, and appeal. To focus our fears, as so many do, on homosexuals and to build and maintain social barriers against them is to settle on an easy target while ignoring the real evils that plague our society today.

The issue, again, is not whether one is homosexual in orientation or not, or even whether one's personal attitude toward homosexuals and homosexual practices should be compassionate, tolerant, or condemnatory. If we are to be true to our professedly democratic values and, even more, to our Christian ideals, such legislation is needed and should be supported. It is the person, whatever his or her "orientation," who is entitled to the rights this legislation affirms and seeks to protect.

A society which denies that person the free choice of decent and available housing, a job suited to his or her interests and qualifications, or any of the other privileges and responsibilities of citizenship is an unjust society. Any religious community that chooses to support such a denial of rights must accept a significant share of the guilt for permitting and perpetuating that terrible injustice. □

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in all his thirty-five years. He told me about how he had come to learn the value of patience and the need to take each moment as it comes.

George didn't receive many visitors. He was not comfortable telling his friends that he had AIDS, and his disfigurement was especially difficult.

"My mother comes up, and my father has been here too," he told me. Then he was quiet for awhile.

He continued, "I was my mother's favorite...."

In the midst of the silence which followed I could sense the emotion building.

"...My greatest concern is for her and how difficult it is for her to see me looking like this. I mean the AIDS is bad enough, but now this drug reaction....And yet, the best thing that has happened in all of this is what my father said."

"What did he say, George?" I asked.

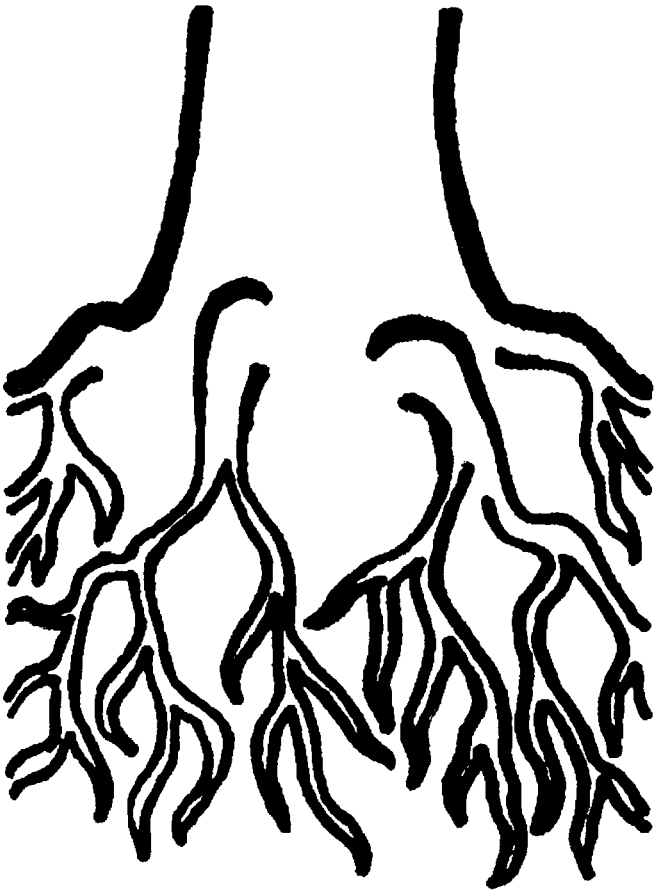
"You have to know my father. We have never been the type that goes around saying affectionate things to one another. But he stood in that doorway one night just before leaving, and he turned around and looked at me (tears were building in his eyes) and he said, 'George, I love you.' Just as simple as that."

He reached out and I tenderly took his hand. In holding George's fragile hand I was aware that I was also touching the scarred hand of another young man in his thirties, and together all three of us wept.

George quietly died three weeks after our meeting.

ROBERT A. SIRICO

Robert A. Sirico, C.S.P., serves on the staff of the Catholic Information Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has worked in the area of AIDS ministry for four years.



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A MAN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

MICHAEL HARRINGTON IN OUR HISTORY

PETER STEINFELS,
JAMES FINN,
& PATRICK LACEFIELD

Life Is a Trust

Michael Harrington first appeared in *Commonweal*'s pages October 3, 1952 with a review of *Saints for Now*, edited by Clare Booth Luce and published by Sheed and Ward. The irony of Harrington, at that time a conscientious objector and a novice socialist, reviewing a book on saints by a champion of capitalism and the Cold War is more apparent than real. Despite some critical comments about Mrs. Luce's collection—he particularly objected to Joan of Arc's being made patron saint of law and order, "a saint for the Cold War"—Harrington underlined the importance of saints, not just as "symbols and cultural meanings," but as men and women who made a difference.

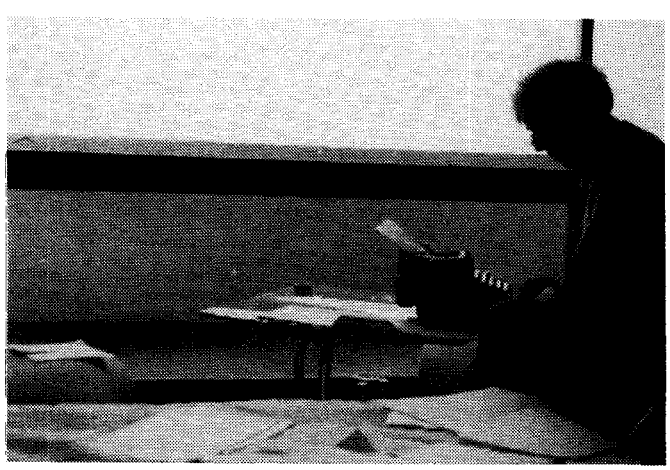
Through decades in which he traveled far, intellectually and politically, Michael Harrington continued to write in these pages. One of the more intriguing of his contributions, eventually republished in his 1985 collection of essays, *Taking Sides*, appeared in the May 27, 1960 issue. Its title was "The Other America." Though not an excerpt or a forerunner of his book by that name—a volume that seized the imagination of many Americans and helped bring about the War on Poverty—the article prefigures an underlying theme of that work. "The Other America" is an essay countering the criticisms of American conformity and complacency and celebrating the diversity and richness rooted in the American sense of equality. "This American egalitarianism is a more decent and human way of people meeting people than exists in societies which have impressive monuments to tradition. Indeed, this is probably the American monument." Almost thirty years later, in an interview that the "MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour" rebroadcast after Michael's death, he used almost the same phrases in affirming his faith in a fundamental American decency.

Ironic indeed, that in the article, Harrington criticized Dwight Macdonald's low opinion of this mass culture—Macdonald being the man who through his review of the book, *The Other America*, in the *New Yorker* did so much to call the book and the issue of widespread, hidden poverty to public attention.

The young reviewer of 1952 was an habitué of the Catholic Worker, a temporary Pascalian returnee to the faith he had thought unsustainable and which, a few months later, he was to decide once and for all that he had lost. But though he left the Catholic church, ceasing to be a "believer," in conversation, in his writing, in his life-long work to bring justice to this world, I doubt that Michael Harrington ever repudiated anything, lost anything, or forgot anything.

Just as *Commonweal*'s name and the names of its editors crop up throughout Michael's writings, so does the question of religion. A chapter in *The Accidental Century*, which followed *The Other America*, addresses "The Crisis of Belief and Disbelief." At the beginning of the 1980s, he updated and modified those views in an entire volume, *The Politics at God's Funeral*, subtitled, "The Spiritual Crisis of Western Civilization." Not long before his death he talked of writing a book about issues of everyday morality.

Perhaps it was an unfortunate legacy of grade-school catechism and Jesuit education that he approached religion largely in terms of doctrine, a God-validated philosophy of life. He gave little attention to religious experience, worship, community. Strangely, he understood about socialism what he seemed to leave out of his thoughts on religion, that it is not a set of pure ideas but a lived reality, an encounter (and a struggle, if you will) with the divine. More of that came through, of course, in his observations on his own religious roots, reflections that were always generous and perceptive. "I am culturally and psychologically a Catholic" wrote this "atheist fellow traveler of moderate Catholicism," who automatically responded to moments of intense beauty by echoing the opening phrases of the Magnificat.



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"Taking religion very seriously while I was growing up was a critical part of the destiny my childhood packed into me," he wrote a year ago. "It meant, above all, that I accepted the idea that life was a trust to be used for a good purpose and accounted for when it was over. I have been an atheist for about thirty years, yet in this fundamental conception of the meaning of existence I am as Catholic as the day on which I made my First Communion."

Michael knew that his commitment to socialism had sprung from the faith of his childhood and, yes, of the Jesuit education for which he was grateful. He often described that commitment in terms of faith. And yet he was careful to insist that socialism should not pose itself as a substitute religion. When it did so, it became an unholy mixture of heaven and earth that would most likely turn out to be infernal. Michael also disagreed with Marx's idea that the coming of socialism would mean the disappearance of human alienation and, with it, of religious faith. On the contrary, he argued, socialism, which could relieve unnecessary suffering but could promise no ultimate remedy to death, tragedy, and evil, might even usher in an intensely religious era, in which the starkest facts of finitude, the most basic questions of human existence, would no longer be cloaked by social injustice.

If Michael Harrington did not achieve what Paul Ricoeur called a "second naiveté" in religious faith—a capacity for belief and worship that has encountered and absorbed the modern critique of religion—he was the very model of such an attitude in his commitment to socialism. His refusal to tolerate social injustice began in 1949 with a chance exposure to a rotting slum. But a few years later he was schooled in a branch of anti-Stalinist socialism for which a central problem was the fact that in our time the socialist struggle against injustice had lent itself to totalitarian evil, crushing freedom instead of creating it.

The consciousness of this fact, much like the consciousness for Christians of the mass cruelties that have been committed in the name of their God, kept Michael's socialist faith from ever being simple, made him sensitive to the historical detours and delusions it had suffered. It was not enough to proclaim a radical vision and hold to it courageously. One had to substantiate it, test it, risk it against the claims of critics—and often that was the greater part of courage, certainly of hard work. An aspiring, and published, poet in his younger years (his last major article for *Commonweal* was an extraordinary appreciation of James Merrill's *The Changing Light at Sandover*), Michael not only made himself a scholar of Marx and of socialist history, he plunged into government documents of every kind and tracked political and economic events in the serious press of several languages. References to Marx, Proust, and a U.S. Senate committee report might be found side-by-side in his writings. Again and again he rethought his notions about socialism, both ends and means, starting a brilliant book on the subject, the just-published *Socialism: Past and Future*, on the very day that doctors told him he had inoperable cancer.

These efforts were never as sweeping, as clearcut, as they might have been if they had issued from his study alone. They were, in fact, forged in the process of political activity, of building coalitions and sharing the often indeterminate experiences of socialist parties throughout the world. Unlike believers who think that good intentions and religious fervor suffice in the world of political and social struggle, Michael knew the necessity of blending action, knowledge, and critical thought. Unlike those who discover the weaknesses in their radical political simplicities and promptly think their disabused condition is the ultimate stage of worldly wisdom, Michael had a lasting commitment that would neither ignore nor surrender to setbacks, betrayals, and historical ironies.

Michael Harrington was a writer, teacher, orator, organizer, a man of sentiment who could weep for the fate of a character in a novel, a man of intellect who knew how to respect but distrust sentiment, a man of unflagging energy and generosity in the pursuit of a just, free, and equal society. He was a man who made a difference.

PETER STEINFELS

Peter Steinfels, formerly the editor of Commonweal, *is the religion correspondent for the* New York Times.

A Radical Commitment

Michael Harrington and I met over the pages of *Commonweal*. I remember very clearly that first meeting over forty years ago.

I was sitting in the Modern Language Reading Room at the University of Chicago, under the attractive but rather severe countenance of François Mauriac, whose picture was mounted on a column in front of me, when a shadow fell across my desk. I glanced up to see a young blond guy standing at the side of my cubicle. "Interesting magazine, isn't it?" he asked. I looked down at my desk to see what he was referring to. The only visible magazine was the latest issue of *Commonweal*, which I had been reading. "Yes," I agreed rather dimly, not knowing quite where to go from there. But Mike did. He had used the *Commonweal* to find out whether I was a Catholic. That fact established, our conversation was launched. It led us, over a short time, to talk about religion, our backgrounds, our favorite authors, our uncertain plans for the future—and all the great questions of life.

Mike's interests at that time were primarily literary and aesthetic, as were my own. We saw much of life through the prism thus provided. When we would go to the movies—a quaint term today—we would subject even the lightest fluff of a film to the heavy artillery provided by our study of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

When we received our degrees in 1949, I headed for the broad plains of Nebraska and my first teaching position, Mike for the high adventure of New York, part-time work, and a literary career. We kept in touch and when I accepted a teaching fellowship a N.Y.U., Mike was there to introduce me to various attractions of the city—high among them being a nearby bar, the San Remo.

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Finding my fellow students at N.Y.U. less interesting than our fellow drinkers at the San Remo, I gradually transferred my evening's allegiance to the latter. And when "the bad place"—our name for the Remo—would overflow, we headed for the White Horse where, among the constantly shifting population, there was a relatively stable community of people who were content to drink and talk the night away—religion, politics, ballet, psychoanalysis, theater, books, movies, friends, gossip. (Could it possibly have been as scintillating and witty, as informed and sophisticated as we thought it? Did great brilliance waste itself, unrecorded, on the midnight air? It is probably best not to press such questions.)

It was during this period that Mike discovered the Catholic Worker and moved into the quarters that were then on Chrystie Street. He had had a few poems published in *Poetry* magazine and thought of himself as a poet *in potentia,* but at the Worker he set foot on the path that he would follow through much of his future life, for it was there that he first seriously encountered socialism and Marx. And since the unspoken rule at the Worker was that whoever turned out the work was the one who filled the columns of the monthly tabloid, his articles soon began to appear in *The Catholic Worker* regularly. His serious intellectual/political life had begun.

After I returned to work on my doctorate at Chicago we kept in touch and *Commonweal* again played an important part in our relation. Mike had been writing for *Commonweal* and when John Cogley, executive editor of the magazine, embarked on an intensive blacklisting study for The Fund for the Republic, he hired Mike as his assistant. In their frequent trips between New York and California, they sometimes stopped off in Chicago. Out of one of these visits came the suggestion that I might become an editor of *Commonweal.* Less simply than I tell it here, I did, and I often edited Mike's contributions.

Back in New York I went with Mike to a number of socialist meetings, featuring, for example, not only Norman Thomas, but the brilliant speaker, Max Shachtman. I was highly impressed with Mike's evident ability to thread his way through the utterly byzantine corridors of socialist organizations, which splintered, regrouped, splintered again, and again regrouped. Mike was, however, still in a learning process. I recall vividly a long, intense debate between Mike and Bill Clancy, another editor of, yes, *Commonweal.* In the presidential contest between Stevenson and Eisenhower, Bill opted for Stevenson, but Mike argued for Darlington Hoopes, the socialist candidate. The debate was not about who would win the election. The question was whether or not one could and should pull the Democratic party to the left, for both Mike and Bill were assured that Stevenson was going to win handily.

As part of his own political education Mike conducted highly informal "socialist seminars" in the back room of the White Horse. I remained in the front. Our political differences grew, but even though the time came when we saw each other only infrequently, our conversations never flagged. I recall Stephanie, his wife, observing us at one party and saying, "Those two have been talking to each other for over thirty years."

As his autobiographical writings reveal, Mike retained an impressive capacity to carouse during the night and work hard during the day. The energy this demanded stood him in good stead as, true to his radical commitment, he became an active political organizer, speaker, theorist, writer, teacher, and debater, always in support of the poor and the oppressed, always with the declared goal of extending the boundaries of political and economic freedoms. *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* raised him to national prominence as a leading socialist in this country. He became a noticeable actor on the large political scene, national and international. To be a socialist and a Marxist in America is not the surest way to honor and recognition; it is a mark of both Mike's great gifts and integrity that on his death many people of widely diverse political views acknowledged the essential honesty, decency, and dedication that he brought to the political struggle.

Mike lived an intensely political life, but in his own eyes his life was not entirely encompassed by politics. When I last saw him, earlier this year, we recalled our days at Chicago and Mike said that he had determined then that he would be a writer—and

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A parable

In desert societies—including the American Southwest—water is so precious that it is money. People connive and fight and die over it; governments covet it; marriages are even made and broken because of it. If one were to talk to a person who has known only that desert and tell him that in the city there are public water fountains and that children are even sometimes allowed to turn on the fire hydrants in the summer and to frolic in the water, he would be sure one were crazy. For he knows, with an existential certitude, that it is human nature to fight over water.

Mankind has lived now for several millennia in the desert. Our minds and emotions are conditioned by that bitter experience; we do not dare to think that things could be otherwise. Yet there are signs that we are, without really having planned it that way, marching out of the desert. There are some who are loath to leave behind the consolation of familiar brutalities; there are others who in one way or another would like to impose the law of the desert upon the Promised Land. It may even be possible that mankind cannot bear too much happiness.

It is also possible that we will seize this opportunity and make of the earth a homeland rather than an exile. That is the social project. It does not promise, or even seek, to abolish the human condition, for that is impossible. It does propose to end that invidious competition and venality which, because scarcity allowed no other alternatives, we have come to think are inseparable from our humanity.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
Socialism (1970)

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that he had fulfilled that determination. Knowing that he was soon to die, he had the uncommon satisfaction of seeing the entire pattern of his life and judging it to be good. I am grateful to be able to note in these pages the small part I played in that pattern. JAMES FINN

James Finn is editorial director of Freedom House and editor of its bimonthly magazine, Freedom at Issue.

Left Wing of the Possible

My last remembrance of Mike Harrington was a clenched fist. I didn't see the fist, mind you. It was two days before his death and I called the Harrington homestead to check in. He'd been home from the hospital after eight weeks of losing ground in his eighteen-month battle against his second cancer. His voice reduced to a hoarse whisper, he depended on his wife Stephanie for most of his communicating.

"Does Mike have any messages for us?" I asked her. She turned to relay my words to him.

"Patrick, he's giving you a clenched fist."

"Hell, Stephanie, give him one back for us." Two days later he was gone.

After all the thousands of words—through news clippings, television commentaries, cards, letters, and faxes—that have flowed across my desk since Mike died, it's a little hard to know where to begin. I first tripped across Mike in the shabby "penthouse" of the old Hotel Muehlbach in Kansas City during the Democratic party's midterm 1974 convention. I was one of a scraggly group of peaceniks who had set up a traveling exhibit of photos to illustrate the U.S. responsibility to reconstruct Vietnam, grant amnesty to war resisters, and cut off aid once and for all to the Thieu regime still clinging to power.

I can't recall Mike's exact words then, try as I might. I'm sure that he spoke about the need to build broader coalitions—to reach out beyond the usual suspects and actually try to persuade—yes, persuade—ordinary folks that America's problems require radical solutions and approaches beyond the constraints of timid liberalism. His was a radical vision of how the world could work, completely divorced from sectarian, moralistic posturing and armchair philosophizing. The work, he probably said, is to build a democratic left working within the left wing of the possible. He sold me on it that night and I signed on for the duration.

Mike was a patriot in the best sense of the word. "It was as a socialist and because I was socialist, that I fell in love with America," he wrote last year in his second autobiographical work, *The Long-Distance Runner*. "I am...underlining a crucial political truth. If the left wants to change this country because it hates it, then the people will never listen to the left and the people will be right." Neither this nor Mike's long-standing and principled and progressive anticommunism went down too well with those who fixated on whatever third-world authoritarianism as a model and seemed to revel in their political and cultural marginality.

Other folks, on Mike's right flank, also just couldn't catch on. "Mike," they would say, "why not drop this socialism stuff. Haven't you figured out that you are whistlin' in the wind?" What these people couldn't grasp was that socialism was at the very heart of Mike's being. In this most proudly unsocialist of lands, Mike insisted on building a democratic socialist center—the Democratic Socialists of America—which would link arms with the broader democratic left to build a majoritarian movement. He knew the odds. He knew the historical baggage that socialism carried—the "modest successes" and "massive betrayals" that always seem to cling to any great idea. Still, as he himself put it, "to be a socialist is to make an act of faith, of love even, toward this land....It is to sense the seed beneath the snow; to see, beneath the veneer of corruption and meanness and the commercialization of human relationships, men and women capable of controlling their own destinies."

Solidarity was the concept that fueled Mike's socialism—a society where none are doomed by race, class, or region to a future where they will not have the opportunity to pursue their God-given gifts. That's a hell of a lot more than just a plant-closing law—or a liberalism mired in special interests and indifferent to how little people get left behind.

With his puckish Irish manner, easy charm, and ready smile, Mike faced with incredible courage an uphill battle against the cancer that finally took him from us. From October 1987, when he was diagnosed, until February of this year, Mike maintained a schedule that, though reduced by a third, would have brought a healthier man to his knees. Teaching working-class kids at Queens College. Lecturing in Iowa and Ireland. Tending the organizational fences at the Democratic Socialists of America. Writing his best two books in a dozen years. Working with Willy Brandt and Michael Manley and company at the Socialist International. Passionately discharging his duties as husband and father. Mike made his mark in the first place by dint of discipline—in his research, his speaking, his writing, his politics. That very discipline served him to the end.

"Is there anything I can do?" I asked him a couple of months back, as his condition seemed to be slipping. "Yeah," he answered matter-of-factly, "come up with a cure for cancer." Then he added, "And make it cherry-flavored."

That was Mike. He inspired us to live a life rich in commitment—commitment born in equal parts from joy and anger. And—in the end—he taught us how to die. As the right-wing *New York Post*, an unlikely source, editorialized: "The American left is poorer for his passing, as is American life in general." As are we all. PATRICK LACEFIELD

Patrick Lacefield is the national organizational director of the Democratic Socialists of America.

A memorial service to honor Michael Harrington will be held at Riverside Church (Riverside Drive and 120th Street, New York City) on Friday, September 15, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

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WHEN LAITY LEAD

PUTTING THE PRIEST IN CONTEXT

JOHN FIGUEROA

After hours of being lost in the rush hour traffic, we got to the apartment on the Seine overlooking Notre Dame. "We must attend Mass one afternoon," we agreed. I had been missing the Sunday rite, the habitual gathering with the hopeful: "Lord, I am not worthy, but only say the word and I shall be healed."

The following Saturday afternoon in the quiet wooded countryside of Feuguerolles, we learned that there were few priests here these days; a priest visited each of the many country churches once a month. This Sunday, Mass would be celebrated at Ecauville, some ten minutes away.

When we got to the church, however, we realized from the French handout that we were not about to join in the celebration of Mass, but were going to "make" a "Sunday assembly in the absence of a priest." The *animateur* was a smartly dressed and handsome young woman.

The small, rough-hewn church with wooden benches, enclosed as if against winter winds, was nearly full, and the variety within the congregation took me by surprise: older farming men with windblown faces and ladies not built for modern Paris fashions; a strikingly good-looking organist with long black hair, who could have graced any Paris fashion; some lively young children; and about five black people, four of them quite young, one an older woman.

The service began: "Let us join together as one people....Let us accept into each heart the very Word of God, a Word of Love, a Word of Togetherness which will enlighten for us the question of confidence...and may each word find in each one of us a responsive heart...."

We then asked pardon for our sins and celebrated the Liturgy of the Word, with a brief commentary by the *animateur*. There was a double theme enlightening this part of the liturgy: the need for real choice and commitment in Christianity; and the much more difficult idea: *Le mariage est un symbole privilégié de l'alliance établie entre Dieu et l'humanité*. After the Gospel, we recited the Creed and Bidding Prayers, and, gathering around the altar in a large circle, we shared Communion that had been consecrated in this very church the previous Sunday.

What the service did for me, besides shoring up a very weak spirituality, was to raise some questions: Will we ever have the number of priests we used to have? Do we need them? Do we need married priests? Can we do without women priests? With all the changes in the roles of women and men in families, politics, universities, and in business, can the role of priest be what it used to be? Can the roles of the laity—women and men—in worship, intercession, in parish decision making remain unchanged? We pray regularly for "vocations," but we also know that unless we pray for the right things our prayers will not be answered.

I am not asking whether these things must change completely, but whether they can remain absolutely unchanged when the priest is no longer the only literate, educated person in the community, when celibacy in the modern world is not what it was a hundred years ago.

So many more laity now would like to have some real say, rather than rubber stamp the running and financing of parishes. And in some cases when they appear to show no interest, it is because they know that if their opinion or expertise runs counter to that of the parish priest, they are likely to be told that "the church is not a democracy."

Why hasn't the kind of edifying assembly we experienced in Ecauville been more widely organized and encouraged? Perhaps because all of us are expecting too many different things from Sunday Mass: contemplation, enjoyment of the kind of music we like, instruction in the faith, meeting with friends, news about neighbors, opportunity for finding fault with the church or the travels of the pope. Hardly ever do we concentrate on making palpable the people of God in the act which we do "in memory of Jesus"—confessing our sins, actively praising God, listening to and reciting words from Scripture, being overcome again and again by those shaking words: Take and eat. This is my body; this is my blood.

The key question is: what do we need priests for? Why don't lay women and men stop acting as if they can't pray in their houses, or together in a church, or read the Scriptures, or study their faith, or preach to each other? Are they waiting for Mother or Father to tell them that it is all right? Why don't lay people make more assemblies for themselves? Perhaps we are all too lazy or too preoccupied with trying to make an honest living, being solicitous over many things.

The issue is not whether we should deny the existence of the deposit of faith or whether we should adopt an everything-goes attitude. It is whether we should try to test a matter like the

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traditional perception of the priest's role against the context in which it grew up, with respect to today's context.

There was a time when one was taught that a priest is essentially one who offers sacrifice. But there is no need to be too narrow. It is now quite common, for example, for priests to say that it is the responsibility of parents to instruct their children in the faith. Would that insight be so strong if parish priests were not so busy and if general education and literacy had not improved?

Must not the context of self-government and self-determination as an ideal that has grown in this century affect the presupposition that the only one in a parish who can lead in all matters is the priest? One could still hold the traditional view of the priest as the icon of Christ offering up the unbloody sacrifice and officiating at the sacraments as his main role, without denying that there could well be, and no doubt are, women and men in the parish who could preach and teach and counsel and lead prayer as well as any priest. Might it not be considered a sin of omission that such persons are not always trained, used, or even encouraged? □

SCREEN

TRYING TO PLEASE

'PARENTHOOD' & 'HARRY MET SALLY'

Parenthood broadcasts more messages than the electronic news board in Times Square. For those tempted by doubt, the moviemakers have blessed procreation and its associated husbandry, and given a resounding endorsement to the nuclear or nearly nuclear family established by God, Donna Reed, and the Cleavers in the moribund 1950s. Perhaps Ron Howard, childhood star of TV's "The Andy Griffith Show" and long a fixture on the frankly nostalgic sitcom "Happy Days," was born to direct this comedy.

The domestic platitudes are unobjectionable enough: blood is thicker than gambling debts or race; raising a family can be as challenging as other, better paid, grown-up occupations; children deepen one's love for a spouse; you cannot remake the world through a child; family life requires sacrifices. But in some ways it plays like that most dreadful of instructional primers: the old Catholic marriage manual.

Director Howard (*Splash*) is not without a gift of whimsy. He knows a sharp line, a funny bit. He wants to please, and his heart is in the right place. In *Cocoon*, Howard resurrected Don Ameche as one of a pack of senior citizens and conferred a suburban equanimity on the idea of death. Childrearing is similarly sanitized in *Parenthood*.

Steve Martin, the nimble, self-assured comedian, plays Gil Buckman, the film's dutiful father. Gil is anxious to provide his children with the kind of understanding and encouragement his irascible father (Jason Robards) never offered. He is assisted in his reformation projects by Mary Steenburgen (*Melvin and Howard*), as his doe-eyed wife Karen, an earth mother of calm and oceanic perseverance. As the ideal mum and companion, Steenburgen seems to float just a step above the chaos engulfing her wholesome brood. Meanwhile, she looks on with tolerant perplexity at the calamities shattering the households of her husband's troubled siblings.

Martin is alive for the camera in a way few actors are, and you long for his quick return whenever *Parenthood* trundles off on its other dramatic errands. In his honest clowning at his son's birthday party, or in the simple incredulity on his face when exposed to his employer's cynicism, he conveys the everyday

Martyr in the making

Romero tells well a story already known to most of us. The movie—sponsored in part with money from the Catholic Communications Campaign, the media arm of the USCC—sticks close to its subject: the short period in which Oscar Romero served as archbishop of El Salvador, before his assassination by right wingers in 1980.

Despite an uneven beginning, with overdone music and one or two doses of excessive sentimentality, the film has a quiet, understated power. It provides sequences of dire poverty, death squads, and one soul anguished by the horror around him. As Elie Wiesel has said, in some stories all you have to do is tell the truth to be sensational.

Romero stars Raul Julia, who foregoes overacting here for a perfect restraint. Julia develops his character slowly, embodying Romero's hesitations, his lack of understanding about the social situation, his kinship with the Salvadoran upper class, his enjoyment of creature comforts, his full humanity. Here—more powerfully than in *The Last Temptation*—is a modern version of the biblical story of a man called by God to a high mission he would rather not have, even rather not know about.

In one sequence, Romero, intimidated by vicious soldiers who have closed a rural church and machine-gunned the tabernacle, retreats and goes to his car, but comes back to pick up the scattered hosts, despite more intimidation and physical abuse. Romero then drives off, only to return a second time; he puts on his vestments and leads a crowd into the church to say Mass, facing down the soldiers. Julia's performance is superb.

Writer John Sacret Young (of *China Beach*) and director John Duigan are to be commended for their work on the film, along with Paulist Father Ellwood E. Kieser, the producer, who has pushed this project since the week of Romero's brutal killing. The central scenes are strokes of genius: Romero's commitment, as shown here, is as messy, as indecisive, and as real as life. T.O'B

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desperation and shock we all feel but rarely express. He and Robards shift a lifetime of unresolved resentments back and forth in a succession of bitter quips as a mutually wary adult son and father. Robards is never without a cranky bark or malevolent aside.

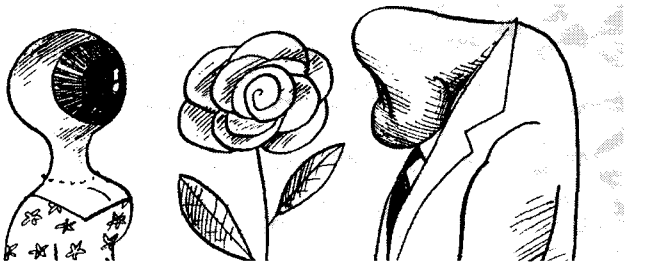
As Gil's sister Helen, Dianne Wiest, who won an Academy Award for *Hannah and Her Sisters*, is cast once again as a seemingly brittle yet determined neurotic. She is *Parenthood*'s most pathetic modern casualty, a divorced and fatally permissive parent with two troubled and rebellious teen-agers. Since she was left by her former husband (a dentist, the archetypal suburban villain) to fend for herself, her own emotional life has all but atrophied. Helen's scowling daughter marries a dolt, while her barely pubescent son has discovered the feral joys of concupiscence, turning into a mute and shaggy-haired creature who rarely leaves his lair. The situation and the jokes are very familiar; the final reconciliations unbelievable.

Parenthood's too-busy canvas also features Rick Moranis and Harley Kozak as another pair of budding parents. Their over-stimulated and joyless little girl is tortured with flash cards and threatened with foreign language study. These are the yuppies from pre-kindergarten Hell, the contemporary version of Frankenstein. Tom Hulce, of *Amadeus* fame, skirts in and out as the elder Buckmans' prodigal son, the one to whom Dad is almost too eager to turn over the fruits of his labors.

Parenthood muddles through. A go-cart of a movie, it finally breaks down under the weight of a wordless, extravagantly composed coda on birthing and the joys of multigenerational families. Its principal error is in failing to risk reimagining the emotional contours of family life. Martin teases us with some of these missed possibilities when racing about dressed in a makeshift cowboy outfit, desperate to make the world both wonderful and safe for his son. His is a fatherly passion sorely missed both on and, presumably, off screen.

Passion is also the curiously missing ingredient in director Rob Reiner's otherwise effervescent modern romance, *When Harry Met Sally....* Reiner has said that he set out to explore the question of whether people of the opposite sex can be merely friends. Harry Burns, played by the quick-witted Billy Crystal, says no. Sally Albright, who lives up to her name as played by perky Meg Ryan, says yes. These two attractive and intelligent New Yorkers waltz around each other as friends for a decade before finally admitting what everyone had known all along: they belonged together as man and wife.

In the days of Cary Grant and Irene Dunne, this used to be called "the battle of the sexes," and Grant usually ended up doing back flips, without mussing his hair, and melting all opposition. Crystal is no Grant, and the somersaults in *When Harry Met Sally...*are all verbal. Still, screenwriter Nora Ephron (*Silkwood* and *Heartburn*) can banter with the best of them, and no other movie this summer delivers more laughs. Only a pedant will begrudge Reiner (son of Carl) his masterly way with a setup and a punch line. Funny? you ask. I know funny, this moviemaker can boast.



Beyond funny he's lost. Harry and Sally have the emotional range of your average soybean options traders. That Reiner starts them out in the notoriously angst-ridden Gothic courtyards of the University of Chicago is almost quaintly pretentious. This couple's fevered volubility and narcissistic soulsearching are as transparent as the movie's own eagerness to please. Harry's long-feared encounter with his ex-wife and her husband is the best indication of how thin this material is: it falls flatter than the last University of Chicago football team. Crystal's anguish comes across as gastrointestinal.

Comedian Crystal doesn't have to reach very deep for his character; Harry has a standup comic's fatal patter, a mordant wit one can dislike but not ignore. Miss Ryan, who has shown—in *D.O.A.* and elsewhere—that she can act, is as bright-eyed and earnest as a fifteen-year-old cheerleader. She's a better physical actress than a comic monologist, and comes out on the short end of nearly every confrontation with Crystal, who is all mouth.

When Harry Met Sally... is trite and sentimental. Its portentous philosophical debate about sex and its corruption of friendship can be dismissed out of hand. But the music, by Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, and the other usual suspects, is seductive. Crystal is funny, and Reiner moves us limpidly from one bit of shtick to the next. Carrie Fisher's supporting role as a desperate, single, New York woman has an endearing, rabid lunacy as well.

Known best as the "Meathead" of television's "All In the Family," Reiner has a sweet tooth where his sense of conflict and character should be. He makes clever but essentially ephemeral films—there's a lot of the antic goofing of the *Mad* magazine sort at work. *When Harry Met Sally...* is strongly reminiscent of an early Reiner film, *The Sure Thing*, which similarly contrasted an easy sexual morality with the nagging questions of love and loyalty. Despite his forever quipping approach, Reiner retains an undergraduate's sincerity.

The story flirts with something outsized and close to the bone when Harry briefly deserts Sally, relegating her to the status of just another of his one-night stands. These lovers suddenly come to resent each other, as we do anyone we can't help but love or need. But this passes quickly; indeed, it's the prelude to wedding bells. Reiner even throws in a series of droll cameos featuring wizened married couples reminiscing about their seemingly fated, life-long romances. He wants you to feel guilty if you don't like his movie, and he succeeds.

PAUL BAUMANN

Paul Baumann is a staff writer and movie critic for The Day *in New London, Connecticut. He is filling in for Tom O'Brien, who is on vacation.*

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The Philippines: Still waiting for Cory

IN OUR IMAGE
America's Empire in the Philippines
Stanley Karnow
Random House, $24.95, 494 pp.

John C. Cort

In February of 1986, during the counting and miscounting of ballots in the election that led to the departure of Ferdinand Marcos, the Filipino community in the Boston area organized a Mass to pray for a successful outcome. After the Mass there was a reception at the former home of Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, the murdered husband of Corazon (Cory) Aquino, who shortly thereafter became, and still is, president of the Philippines.

I noticed a T-shirt inscription on the back of a young Filipino in attendance: "'Man's sense of justice makes democracy possible; man's injustice makes democracy necessary'—Ninoy Aquino."

The quote is close enough, but the origin is not. Reinhold Niebuhr is the man who wrote words to that effect in *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, perhaps his most insightful book. Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image* is probably the most insightful as well as the most factual and readable book ever written on the Philippines, but he does not even give Ninoy Aquino credit for believing what Niebuhr wrote.

Karnow quotes remarks of Aquino in which he cited as models "Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and General Park Chung Hee of South Korea, both rigid rulers. 'You can be authoritarian in Asia,' he held, 'provided there is an economic tradeoff.'" I wish Karnow had also cited the passage from Aquino's 145-page defense against the sentence of death handed down by Marcos's military tribunal during his seven-year jail term. This should be taken as seriously as inexplicit references to Yew and Hee. He wrote, "My ideology flows with the mainstream of Christian democratic socialism as presently practiced in Austria, West Germany, and the Scandinavian countries....It grieves me profoundly to be carelessly branded a Communist by those who never bothered to understand the difference between communism and Christian socialism."

Although Karnow pays tribute to aspects of the lives and personalities of Ninoy and Cory Aquino, he does have a tendency toward that "acid impartiality as respects parties or individuals" that John Ludlow found in the historical works of Karl Marx. This lends an air of credibility when used in moderation, but when overworked can be an irritant. For example, even as he describes Cory's remarks at her husband's funeral, Karnow notes that she spoke in "a nasal tone." And a few pages later: "Her Joan of Arc image, though a tired stereotype, was nevertheless real." One wants to complain: Come on, Stanley, make up your mind: "tired stereotype" or "real image"?

Still, for the most part this is an excellent book. It contains almost all you never knew you wanted to know about the Philippines and manages to deliver it without boredom. No mean feat. From centuries before the discovery by Magellan in 1521 through the exploitation by the Spaniards to 1898 and the sometimes brutal, sometimes more subtle, ambiguous exploitation by the U.S. since, right through the failure of Cory to do something really substantial about land reform and the privileges of the rich—it is all there. Finally, there is the uneasy reminder that the president's failure has given the Communist rebels a continuing grip on life, when she might have knocked them out after that marvelous nonviolent revolution that raised her popularity and power to their zenith.

Let's be fair, Stanley Karnow. What did you expect of a quiet, pious housewife who had lived so long in the shadow of her dynamic, voluble husband? That she was able to exorcise the evil genies of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos and their thieving cronies when, probably, no one else could do it, is enough to warrant our eternal gratitude. And given the concentrated job training and hardening that she, a gutsy, intelligent woman, has acquired over the last three-and-a-half years, perhaps she can yet prove the truth of

> *[Governor William Howard] Taft's promotion of the* illustrados *[rich, educated Filipinos] reinforced a pattern that endures to this day. By cultivating the upper crust, he strengthened the wealthy families that had originally emerged during the Spanish colonial era, and many still hold sway. Ferdinand Marcos was to smash the old oligarchs seventy years later, but he supplanted them with his greedier cronies. The dispossessed dynasties, determined to regain their privileges, were instrumental in ousting him in favor of Corazon Aquino. She, however, also belonged to the landed gentry and showed no signs of drastically renovating the society. So while Filipinos echoed the rhetoric of U.S. democracy, often to soothe American ears, the Philippines remained, as Ninoy Aquino wrote in 1968, "an entrenched plutocracy."*
>
> —Stanley Karnow
> *In Our Image*

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Niebuhr's aphorism. Who else has any chance of doing that?

Niebuhr himself, of course, wavered in his faith in that aphorism, especially as regards underdeveloped and Oriental countries, which in his later, elitist years, he thought lacked the economic and ethical qualities necessary. But the truth of Winston Churchill's more pragmatic aphorism applies even to them: "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Perhaps Cory Aquino tired sometimes of listening to her talkative husband. But I would hope that she might reflect on that quote from the *apologia pro vita sua* that he wrote in the prison where he underwent his own conversion to a more meaningful Christianity and expressed his faith in democratic socialism. She still has immense popularity among the Filipino people; she has intelligence and Christian faith. All she needs is the guts to do something meaningful about land reform and the privileges of her rich relatives and friends and she could still confound talented cynics like Stanley Karnow. □

INFANTS ON THE DOORSTEP

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS
The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance
John Boswell
Pantheon Books, $24.95, 488 pp.

Peggy R. Ellsberg

The Kindness of Strangers is a riveting historical examination of how the late antique and medieval periods handled a surprisingly topical problem: what to do with unwanted children. According to John Boswell, the conventional practice was to leave the baby at a public place, on the doorstep of a church, convent, or monastery, or—after the fourteenth century—at a foundling hospital. In researching this phenomenon, John Boswell consulted church fathers, the annals of canon and civil law, baptismal records, archives of hospitals, letters, legends, censuses, all the demographic findings that cliometric wizardry can provide, and, it would seem every secondary source in every pertinent language ever published.

Boswell introduces his study by calling it "the investigation of a mystery"—a mystery that even after his dazzling research remains more or less unsolved: who abandoned their children, to what or to whom, and why?

In researching his previous book, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980), Boswell reports that he was intrigued by several early Christian admonishments that "men should not visit brothels or have recourse to prostitutes because in doing so they might unwittingly commit incest with a child they had abandoned." He had always understood that pagans left babies on hillsides to die and that Christians could be counted on to rescue them. What he discovered was that child abandonment was a fairly universal practice not only among pagans but among Christians as well, among poor and rich, and at all times and in all places. He argues, however, and tries to prove, that abandonment should not be conflated with infanticide. In fact, it was the *alternative*, almost invariably bearing the intention that kindly strangers would find and raise the baby. "Exposure" of an infant by no means involved the hope that it would "die of exposure"; Boswell points out that the Latin *expositio* means to make public, to expose a baby meant to leave it in a public place. If the abandoned baby should die before it was found, the parents were legally culpable.

Boswell includes a legal document addressing this eventuality in an impressive appendix of his own translations of Greek and Latin texts, texts that offer eloquent demonstrations of the author's contentions. In those centuries before the romanticization and sentimentalization of the child, before the post-psychoanalytic recognition of the complexity of childhood, it was acceptable, even conventional, not just to abandon, but to sell or rent a child. Boswell sees abandonment as an extreme measure taken not to extinguish, but to save a child's life. His motif throughout, then, is optimistic if not exactly euphoric. Abandonment, while not a happy solution, "curtailed the heirs without actually eliminating the children." It was a feasible form of demographic control.

As though to bring relief from the heart-wrenching facts of unweaned, unnamed, whimpering infants left in marketplaces or sold by starving parents, medieval literature and comic dramas from Shakespeare to Fielding to Gilbert and Sullivan abound with long-lost parents, children, and siblings reuniting after years of separation. Boswell shows that such reunions were often planned: abandoning parents might leave a significant token—a special swaddling cloth or an amulet—with the baby, so that the parent could later recognize the child. Medieval people did not write about their feelings the way we do, so we have little record of parental anguish—though there must have been plenty.

Parents chose or were forced to aban-

"Someone left this on our doorstep."

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don babies for various reasons: when they were ashamed (after incest or adultery); when the child was deformed; or when the illegitimacy of the child was too socially egregious (resulting from the union of a slave and master, or from a liaison involving a priest or nun—though Boswell's translations include one record wherein an abbess delivers a baby boy, and the Blessed Mother miraculously transports it to a holy hermit, who is delighted to raise the child. The child ultimately becomes a bishop.) But the main reasons for child abandonment seem to be economic. "In the more precarious ecologies and fragile social structures of pre-modern Europe, a...marriage might produce eight to fifteen children in ten to twenty years." And although one-third could be expected to die in infancy, there still might be too many mouths to feed in a subsistence economy plagued by famine and frequent death. Boswell claims, however, that as many as 25 percent of marriages were infertile (largely due to malnutrition), or had no surviving children. Probably these were the kind strangers most willing to rear abandoned children. Through many of the centuries considered in this book, between 20 and 30 percent of all babies born were abandoned or given away.

With the increased prosperity of the eleventh and twelfth centuries evidence of child abandonment nearly vanished, and parents raised their own offspring. But by the fourteenth century, with its catastrophic plagues, wars, and famines, the problem of unwanted children became so widespread that foundling hospitals were established throughout Europe. Though these charitable institutions—run by the church—were founded with the best intentions, they became death traps, their crowding and disease contributing to an astronomical mortality rate.

Boswell also looks at the practice of oblation as a form of abandonment. Oblation was common in the earlier Middle Ages. A child would be given to a monastery and would be expected to spend his or her life there. However, as David Herlihy pointed out in his review of this book in the *Boston Globe*, oblation should be seen only tangentially as abandonment. "The child oblated to a monastery almost always came with a bequest to meet the costs of supporting him....Moreover, a powerful local family often dominated the religious house, which would choose its abbots from the family's oblated members. The abbot managed the monastery's endowment in the family's interests. The oblation of a child did not obliterate the consciousness or obligations of kinship."

This criticism raises the underlying question of whether Boswell defines "abandonment" too loosely in this study. Furthermore, although the title of the book—*The Kindness of Strangers* (the phrase is from Tertullian)—is arresting, the notion that those adopting the foundlings were strangers might be challenged. It seems likely that in the compact, crowded communities and villages of feudal Europe, most people would know whose baby it was they were picking up from a doorstep. Boswell himself demonstrates that adoptive relationships were often contractual, and that complex systems of reciprocal social obligation might well have attended the taking on of a child.

Reviewers and historians alike have found Boswell's thesis controversial and troubling. Still, even if he has overinterpreted his sources to fit that thesis, the book is highly original, daring, provocative, and absolutely fascinating. It is rare for a scholarly book of medieval history to receive as much critical attention and public discussion as this one has, or to appeal so deeply to a current issue and to a general audience. □

BROTHERHOOD FROM WITHIN

BLACK WORKERS
A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present
Edited by Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis
Temple University Press, $35.95, $14.95 paper, 733 pp.

Lance Compa

No white union in the U.S. allowed a black worker to join its membership before the Civil War. But in New York City, white workers in hotels, restaurants, and saloons asked the all-black Waiters Protective Association for help in winning higher wages from owners—then rejected proposals to form a single union.

Examples of such conflict between deep racial prejudice and the practical need for solidarity run throughout this book. Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis convey a trove of letters, diaries, proceedings, reports, journals, leaflets, articles, and memoirs that tell a pointed story of black workers and their struggles. More than that, they tell a larger story of the American working class and its struggles with employers and inside its own ranks.

The book gathers in a single volume selections from the comprehensive, eight-volume *The Black Worker*, published by Temple University Press beginning in 1978. The richest materials here are autobiographical and eyewitness accounts of the aspirations and courage of black workers, and of the abuses they suffered at the hands of racist employers and white workers. "They seldom called me to do anything without coupling the call with a curse," recalls Frederick Douglass of his work as a youth in a Baltimore shipyard in 1836.

Years later Douglass's son, Lewis, was denied entry into the typographical union local at the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C. "Surely no one who has the welfare of the craft at heart will seriously contend that the union of thousands of white printers should be destroyed for the purpose of granting barren honor of membership to a few Negroes," said an advocate of rejection.

To their credit, a majority of the white members of the local union voted to ac-

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cept Lewis Douglass (however, a two-thirds vote was needed). In a letter to the national union, supporters insisted that color should not bar his admission for both practical and principled reasons: first, "Forcing those of a different color into competition with us must eventually insure the reduction of the prices of labor and the ruin of labor associations," and second, "It is just a relic of that barbarism which was engendered by the system of slavery now happily abolished in our country."

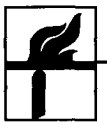
Such expressions of tolerance and solidarity counterweigh the racist sentiments found in this volume, from the slurs of a railroad trainman in 1900 ("the naturally vicious, slothful, filthy, and indolent") to the AFL-CIO's veiled attacks on A. Philip Randolph in the 1960s (charging him with reverse racism for failing to have any whites as headquarters staff employees of the all-black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters).

Government agency and union committee reports are less gripping than first-hand tales of toil and struggle, but they provide a rounded view of the changing status of black workers as the U.S. developed politically and economically from the Civil War to the present. A 1943 war industries manpower report, for example, noted that "discriminatory job specifications are still a formidable barrier in many plants and occupations...the occurrence of discriminatory specifications in unskilled occupations leading to skilled machine jobs is primarily a restriction upon the entry of Negroes into skilled work...." This observation foreshadows the fights over civil rights employment in the 1960s and 1970s, and the recent retreat in antidiscrimination law enforcement by the U.S. Supreme Court in cases which, unless reversed by Congress, could take black workers back to 1943 conditions.

Black Workers ought to be required reading for members of Congress considering new civil rights legislation. It should also be read by anyone who cares about working people and the future of American unionism for it contains many expressions of the dignifying effect of labor organizing on the individual worker. As a black woman hospital worker in Charleston, South Carolina wrote after a long 1969 strike won by an alliance of labor, community, and civil rights forces, "It help me to realize how important I am as a person, which I'm afraid I didn't quite realize before."

At a time when many argue that unions have outlived their usefulness, or that enlightened employers and their "employee involvement" schemes make unions unnecessary, one should ponder A. Philip Randolph's 1927 response to a move by the Pullman rail car company to supplant the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters with an "Employee Representation Plan": "The Brotherhood emanates from within, as an expression of the spirit and lives and hope and faith of the porters in themselves,whereas the plan is imposed on them from without...."

I think the editors give too many pages over to the boilerplate ramblings of black "revolutionary union movements" of the late sixties and early seventies, mostly based in auto plants in the Detroit area. Like other ultra-left groupings of the time,



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they imploded with little to show for their work. However, they did sensitize participants to the interplay of political and trade union issues that some have carried into their current union work.

Much more important, but underrepresented here, is the progress of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). By now the longest-lived black unionist group in our history, the CBTU plays a genuine vanguard role in the labor movement today. As the proportion of union-represented employees in the U.S. workforce continues to slip (now below 17 percent, from 35 percent in the 1950s), black workers, who are organized at nearly twice the rate of whites, are taking a rightful role in leading the labor movement, especially at the regional and local union leadership level. Any future resurgence of organized labor will need full, equal participation of the black unionists *Black Workers* will inform everyone, black or white, involved in that movement. □

THE BEAST WHO WANTED A JEW

SEE UNDER: LOVE
David Grossman
Translated by Betsy Rosenberg
Farrar, Straus Giroux, $22.95, 452 pp.

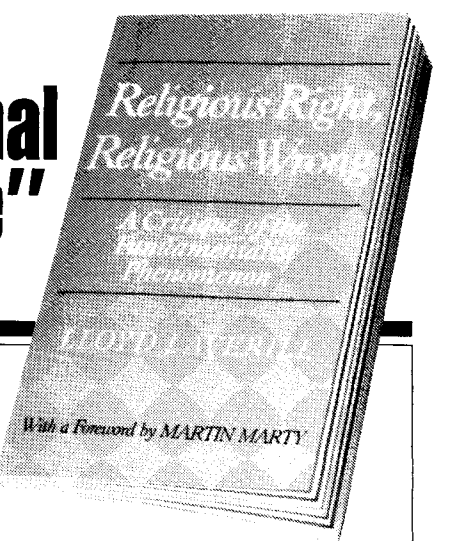
Madeline Marget

See Under: Love is an intricate telling of the worst in human nature and experience. It is also a meditation, ultimately optimistic, on those subjects. Stories within stories show the Holocaust's impact, not only on the characters in the novel or even on the millions who were actually afflicted, but also, and with new force, on the reader. David Grossman is a difficult writer, and he does not spare us the weight of his oppressive subject. Along with the horror he presents, however, he shares with us his great effort to address it.

Grossman's technique and his plot are unified. The book is divided into four sections, each using a different literary method. The story, first set in the 1950s, starts as a straightforward, though complicated, narrative of Momik Neuman, an Israeli nine-year-old for whom the Holocaust is a mysterious and constant terror. He hears it spoken of metaphorically, and sees its manifestations in the adult concentration camp survivors around him: in his parents' protectiveness and suspiciousness, in his neighbor Hannah Zeitlin's desperate and mad prostitution and, most importantly, in the wreckage of his Great-uncle Anshel Wasserman.

Before the war Wasserman, using the pen name Scheherazade, wrote a series of stories called *Children of the Heart*. Now, muttering and helpless, he lives as an example of torment. Everyone close to Momik is broken-hearted and terrified. With precision and understanding, Grossman shows us the reality of this environment for a little boy, and its result: Momik, sensitive and isolated, constructs a fantasy in which he can change fate. He turns "the Nazi Beast" from "Over There" into actual animals that he cages in his cellar. Momik knows the Beast wants a Jew. He draws pictures, he tapes stories to the wall, but nothing appeases the kitten and the bird and the hedgehog. They squeal in misery. And so he brings Great-uncle Anshel—unquestionably a "*Jude*" whom the Beast can smell and see—to the cellar to satisfy the monster, who will then leave Momik and his family alone. The first section ends when Momik's family discovers his project. The adults confer and Momik is sent away to school. For a few sentences Grossman, showing us ordinary parental worry and a practical solution, pulls us outside this Everychild's grief; but the circumstances of all the characters are too serious, dangerous, and immediate to allow us distance for long.

"A Signal of Promise"
—MARTIN E. MARTY



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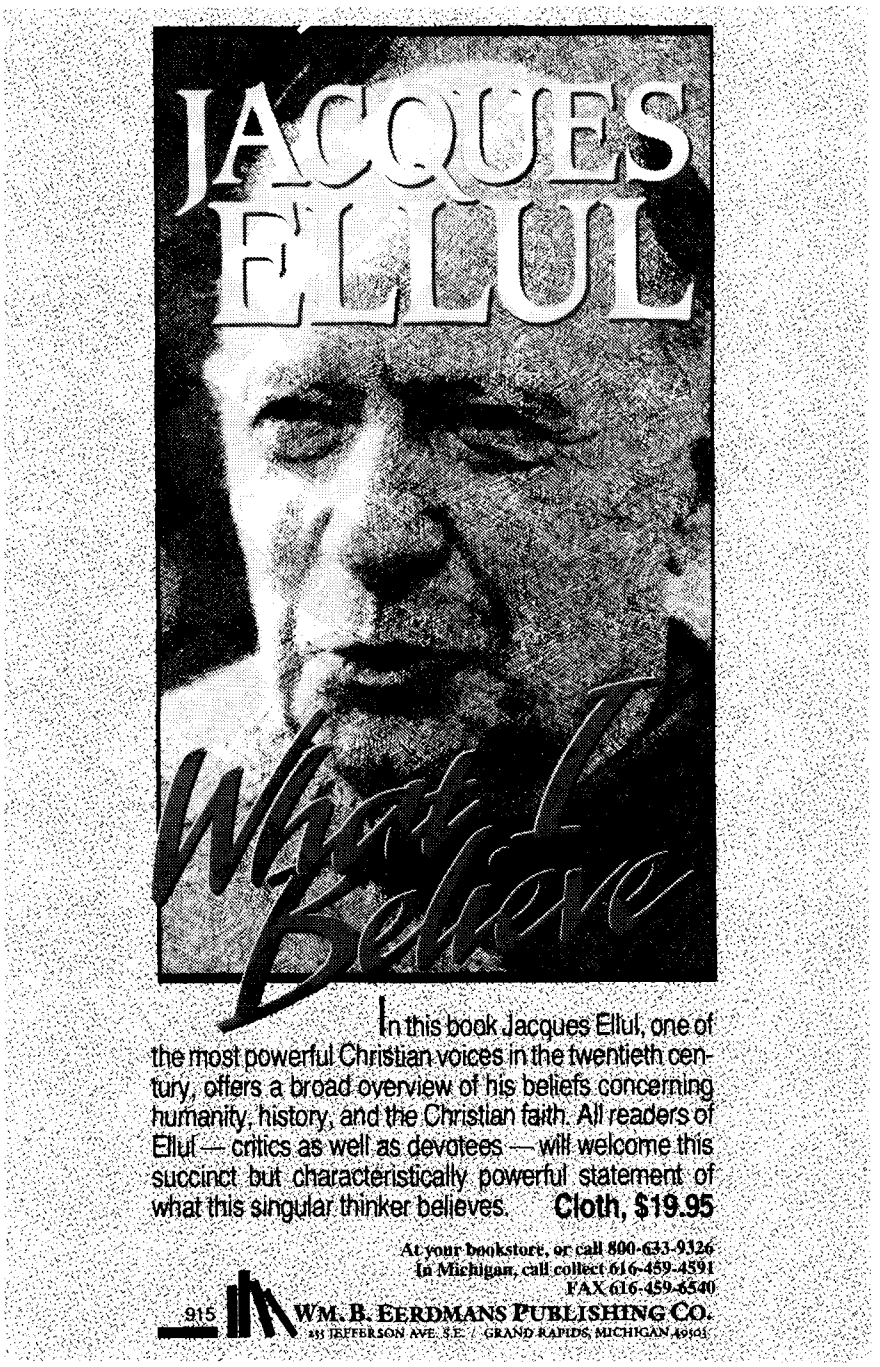
The adult Momik's dialectic with the other characters, his role as the writer of what we're reading, and his personal story are woven into the remaining three sections of the novel. First, in "Bruno," Momik, now a writer, travels to Poland to discover and explicate his family's past. Preoccupied with his unhappy and unsuccessful marriage, fatherhood, and affair, he cannot bring alive Anshel Wasserman's story, as he wishes to do. Instead, he enters into a fantastic tale about the writer Bruno Schultz, here escaping history by diving into the sea and surviving as part of a school of salmon. Though this section is packed with insights and detail that later in the book retrospectively enlighten us, I found its density overwhelming and sometimes confusing.

In "Wasserman," the third section, Grossman moves away from this strained, consciously literary quality and concentrates on the writer Momik's recreation of Anshel Wasserman's life in the concentration camp. There, the commandant Neigel exacts from Anshel further tales of *Children of the Heart*, promising in exchange to kill the storyteller—a reverse Scheherazade—who wants his terrible life ended. Neigel sends the stories under his own name to his estranged wife Christina, hoping to win her back with a show of the decency she knows him to have abandoned. But as he listens to Anshel and talks to him, Neigel finds some common humanity, and he cannot kill Wasserman.

Grossman describes the concentration camp only in succinct asides, thus making Wasserman's cataclysmically dreadful existence seem rounded; almost as present to us as it would be to him. Wasserman steps forward as a real person who invents and feels, recollects and plans, bringing himself and all the other characters—including those he invents in *Children of the Heart*—to life through their relation to him, in and with whom we believe and empathize. Wasserman's last invention is Kazik—a baby born to other characters in *Children of the Heart*—who lives his whole life, from infancy to death of old age, in twenty-four hours.

"The Complete Encyclopedia of Kazik's Life" is the last part of *See Under: Love*, and it is this highly experimental section that provides us the greatest and clearest understanding. By arranging the narrative into dictionary or encyclopedia entries, Grossman simplifies his delivery without sacrificing the breadth of his view. The stories of the previous sections are pieced together and completed, and the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REVIEWERS

JOHN C. CORT *spent several years in the Philippines with the Peace Corps and was a friend of Ninoy Aquino. He is the author of* Christian Socialism.

PEGGY R. ELLSBERG *teaches in the English Department at Vassar College.*

MADELINE MARGET *is a writer, now working on a book about the humane delivery of high-tech medical care. Her "Madeline and Ernie" appeared in the September 23, 1988 issue of* Commonweal.

LANCE COMPA *is Washington counsel for the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE).*

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structure both points to connections and reveals them. The entry titled "Sex" is cross-referenced, and reads, in part, "*see under:* Love." Hannah Zeitlin reappears as a beautiful and desirable woman. Neigel is apparently "distinctly envious of the Jew...for having such confidence in another human being." Momik recalls that at his wedding his aunt "covered her number with a Band-Aid because she didn't want to cast a pall on the happy occasion." And, "In Wasserman's view, the act of choice is the fulfillment of the truly human in man."

In *The Yellow Wind* (reviewed in *Commonweal*, May 20, 1988), Grossman's journalistic account of life on the West Bank, the bleak picture of humanity he gives us is contradicted by the constant example of the writer's intellectual liveliness and his generosity. So it is in *See Under: Love*, where Grossman transcends the horror of his story with the evidence—shown through the astonishingly varied but intellectually and philosophically consistent voice of his fiction—of human potential and its realization. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 450)

one can only grasp managers' moral rules-in-use by also examining their rules for success within their organizations. But in a world that has seen the collapse of overarching systems of moral meaning, managers often find their own choices subject to scrutiny from moral entrepreneurs of every sort, including their own children at the breakfast table. As I point out in the book's last chapter, the managers' lot is to make choices that will inevitably make other people unhappy.

How could Ms. Toffler get things so wrong? Perhaps she is simply a careless reader, the kind of person who reads snippets of a book but does not, or cannot, follow an argument.

Commonweal readers can assess this possibility for themselves by comparing parts of Ms. Toffler's review with the relevant passages of the book. Ms. Toffler seems unable to get things in context. Take, for instance, her report of a "whistle-blowing incident" which, she says, I use for "one more piece of corporation bashing." The relevant passage goes from pp. 128-133. Toffler suggests that "the story" ends on page 130, whereas the story is really two stories about the same manager, a fact clearly stated on page 128. It has nothing to do with "whistle-blowing" but is, in fact, about the importance of silence as the price of social acceptance, even when this means not informing workers about their inhalation of carcinogenic dust. Readers might also compare Toffler's attempt at a clever ending to her review with pp. 145-156, which contain a detailed appraisal of the social roots of managers' sense of psychological beleaguerment. Finally, readers might note the internal contradiction in the review where Toffler misreports the book's main approach and then cites the book correctly to bolster her attack.

But carelessness may not satisfactorily explain the stridency of the review. The book provides a realistic look at managers' work as they themselves experience it. As a rule, men and women who live *for* business recognize in the book the difficult world they live in. Those who live *off* business seem to find the book especially unsettling, since it is they who invent and propagate the jaunty euphemisms and lulling platitudes that mark most discussions of American business. In assessing Ms. Toffler's review from this standpoint, *Commonweal* readers may wish to consult pp. 137-144, where I discuss the habits of mind of management consultants, and pp. 162-190, where I analyze the world of public relations.

ROBERT JACKALL

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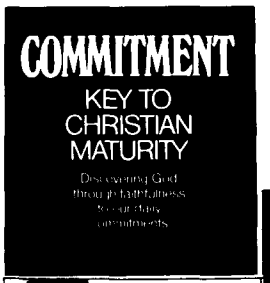

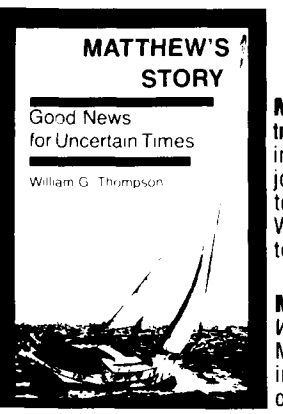

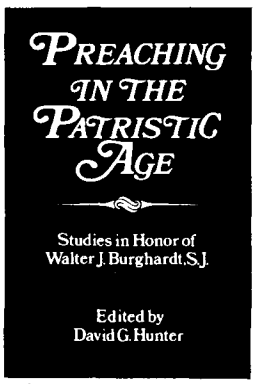

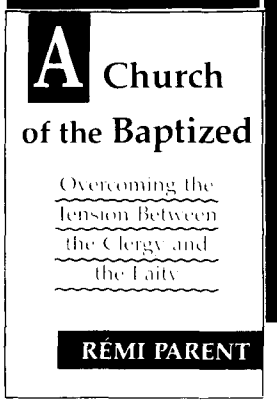

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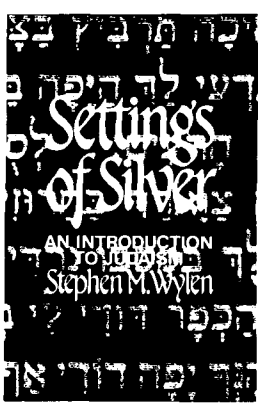

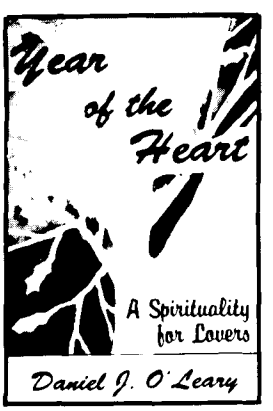

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